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First Committee

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Official Records

Chairman: Mr. Mernier . . . . (Belgium)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 63 to 80 (*continued*)

Action on all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman: I informed members of the Committee at the close of our meeting yesterday morning of the draft resolutions on which the Committee would proceed today to take decisions. Upon a request from delegations to make the order of action on draft resolutions clearer, I asked the Secretariat to produce informal paper No. 1, which members have just received, containing a list of draft resolutions in clusters 1 through 10 that we will take up today.

(*spoke in French*)

I should like to make a clarification. Yesterday some delegations asked explicitly that certain draft resolutions be taken up today. Of course, we took note. Meanwhile, other delegations opposed those particular draft resolutions being taken up today, so members will not find them in the paper. Does any delegation wish to comment on that informal paper?

I call on the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): I have worked with you, Mr. Chairman, for so long and know of your far-sightedness, and it is with regret that I speak today, definitely not in any way contradicting what you have mentioned. Over many years I have grown to respect you and admire your excellent conduct of work, but we had an agreement announced from the floor yesterday that a certain draft resolution, A/C.1/53/L.3, would be acted upon today and acted upon as the first draft resolution in the cluster with which we are to begin. That agreement, which was in a formal meeting of the First Committee, was reported back to my capital, so when we end up today with an informal paper that does not incorporate draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, questions and doubts are raised in my mind. My hunch is that a certain delegation spoke to you, Mr. Chairman, after the meeting ended and you took that request into consideration. The fact remains, however, that we had an agreement in a formal meeting that A/C.1/53/L.3 would be acted upon today as the first draft resolution. That is fact number one.

Fact number two, which I wish to point out at this juncture, is that you, Mr. Chairman, mentioned that a certain delegation in the past 24 hours had requested a delay. We wish to know from the floor which delegation that is. We insist on knowing which delegation that is. It must become known to the entire Committee that a certain delegation is linking actions on different proposals dealing with different agenda items. I am referring to the fact that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3 deals with agenda item 67. Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.1 deals with a separate and different agenda item, namely, item 74. These are two separate agenda items. That is fact number two.

Fact number three: on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3 there are no ongoing consultations. It is a consensus draft resolution. There has been no change from the language in last year's resolution. All the parties agree to that, and all the parties agree to preserve the consensus. So far as my own delegation is concerned, if a certain party wants to

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depart from the consensus, that is their prerogative. Let them do that. Let them bear the responsibility. That is perfectly all right so far as we are concerned, but we are not willing for different items to be held hostage because of certain matters which we cannot understand. I will not go into this matter in any more length but will leave it, Mr. Chairman, to your judgement.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I wish to recall what I said yesterday. Ambassador Karem is absolutely right. We agreed yesterday that that draft resolution would be part of today's programme, subject, of course — and this was repeated I think on several occasions yesterday — to no delegation's asking for a postponement of the voting. The Chairman and the Bureau cannot take that prerogative away from any delegation. Any delegation at any time — and I have tried to limit that time to the end of the day preceding the vote — has the right to ask for a postponement of the voting on any draft resolution, as was done with regard to that particular draft resolution.

I should also like to say that the Chairman cannot firmly promise that a particular draft resolution will be taken up at any particular time. That is in the hands of delegations, and although I can express my regret, unfortunately we cannot act otherwise.

I hope that this explanation will satisfy the Egyptian delegation. I would add that the Chair cannot speculate on why a delegation might have asked for a postponement. That delegation might be in negotiations or awaiting instructions. It is not up to the Chair to decide why a delegation might have asked for a postponement of the voting.

I call on the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): I know that I have limited experience in the First Committee, but I have managed to attend the last four sessions, and it seems to me that strange things are happening at the moment. I express regret to our colleagues in this Committee that we need to delay this meeting because of dealing with these kinds of issues first, but I think we need to work out the rules of the game before we play the game.

First, my delegation contacted the Committee Secretary's office this morning to request a delay in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39. I am willing to identify myself. South Africa is not concerned about that. I would defend the right of delegations wishing to request delays in action being taken on a draft resolution. I do not think it is necessary for myself, but others do have that right. We were then informed by the Committee Secretary that we needed to do it from the floor, which is a different procedure from what I understand to be the case. We have consulted the originators of A/C.1/53/L.39, and they are aware that we want to continue consultations with them on this text before it comes to a vote.

But it is the process here that is a bit of a worry to me. If a delegation such as ours, or any other delegation represented in this room, approaches the secretariat or the Chair with a request for a delay in taking a vote, we would expect that to be respected and not to be thrown back at us. That is the first point.

The second point is that yesterday, working quite actively with some minor disruption, we managed to work our way through nine draft resolutions, and if we look at the list of draft resolutions that lie on the table before us today we will see that there are rather more than nine. I know that you, Mr. Chairman, have great expectations for us, but I do not have as much faith in us as you have. I would be surprised if we actually made our way through all these resolutions and all these clusters today - pleasantly surprised, but surprised nevertheless.

The procedure that the First Committee has adopted in the past is to deal with matters cluster by cluster. Once we have finished, we then return to the first cluster. It is my presumption that we will follow that procedure again this year. In other words, in terms of your informal paper, Mr. Chairman, if we can finish, say, from cluster 1 to cluster 6 or, let us be hopeful and say cluster 7, then tomorrow morning we will start at cluster 8, 9 and 10 and work our way through all the clusters before reverting to cluster 1 again, with the exception, of course, that delegations may wish to raise special draft resolutions on which they would like the voting to be taken earlier. I would also be flexible on that. But I think a general approach such that even if we do not vote on all these clusters today then from tomorrow we would automatically revert back to the first draft resolution that was submitted under cluster 1 - this would be a change in procedure from that which we have followed in the past. I request your clarification, Mr. Chairman, on the two points that I have raised.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): First I should like to say once again that every delegation has the right to ask for a postponement of the voting on any draft resolution, including the ones set out in the informal paper distributed this morning. If delegations wish to do so from their seats, that is totally acceptable. If they wish to do so by approaching the Chair privately, that is totally acceptable as well. However, the Chair will not identify such delegations from the podium without their agreement and will contact the delegation that has requested a postponement to find out whether it wishes to be identified or not. I think that is a fairly usual practice in international forums, and I should like to stick to it.

As to the order in which we will take up the draft resolutions, I would like us to begin with cluster 1 today and continue as far as we can. Tomorrow we will continue with the same list and order, beginning with the draft resolution that we have reached today. I hope that is clear. Let us be optimistic and assume that today we finish cluster 7; then tomorrow we will begin with cluster 8. We will begin again with cluster 1 when we have finished cluster 10. I do not wish to drag this discussion on procedure; is that procedure acceptable to delegations?

I call on the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): As I said earlier, I think we need to establish the rules of the game before we play the game; otherwise we will end up playing different games. In the terms of the ruling you have just made, Mr. Chairman, you have built in a certain contradiction. Yesterday we worked our way through clusters 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. So in the terms of the ruling you have just made on how we are going to operate from tomorrow, we should be beginning with cluster 6 today. However, on the understanding that the procedure adopted today is not going to become the norm, and that unless agreed by the whole Committee we would not automatically revert to cluster 1 every single day, we would be quite willing to go along with your proposal for today. But it would not be agreed as an automatic method of working through the voting process. We are quite comfortable to begin with the votes that you have suggested for today, Mr. Chairman, on the basis of requests from delegations; but I would again say that this should not set a precedent for the approach to our work in the future.

The Chairman *(interpretation from French):* I call on the representative of Brazil.

Mr. Felicio (Brazil): I know you want to move fast, Mr. Chairman, so I will be brief. You are right. Any delegation has the right to request the postponement of voting on any draft resolution. The only thing wrong here is that there has to be some transparency in this process.

You cannot, on the private request of a delegation, decide to postpone the voting on a draft resolution without consulting, for instance, the co-sponsors. In this regard, I feel obliged to firmly support the delegation of Egypt, which intervened at the start of the debate. If the delegation of Egypt wishes draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3 to be put to the vote, this morning then, Mr. Chairman, you have to put it to a vote unless other delegations object and request, in public, that it be postponed, and then you can make a ruling. It is just a matter of transparency. You are right, but transparency has to be applied in our work.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I would like to make a brief statement. Yesterday, several delegations approached me about general statements on clusters. I believe that some delegations did not understand that we were making general statements on each cluster when we took up the cluster for the first time. Today, therefore, we will allow every delegation that so wishes to make a general statement on clusters that have already been taken up. But in future I should like to make it very clear that general statements on each cluster will be made when that cluster is taken up for the first time, and not when we come to the cluster for the third or fourth time. Since yesterday was our first such meeting, today it will be possible to make statements on clusters 1 and 4. I should like to avoid this in future. If delegations have general statements, then they should make them the first time we come to that cluster. I hope I have made that clear.

I call on the representative of Algeria.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): I do not intend to delay the progress of the work of the Committee in considering the draft resolutions before us. The representative of Brazil, preceded by the representatives of Egypt and South Africa, pointed out something that is extremely important and decisive for our work.

We fully respect the decision of the Chair yesterday, but every time there is a postponement the reason and the delegation responsible for that postponement must be given. The sponsors of the draft resolution must at least be able to know the reason for a postponement.

Yesterday evening we communicated to our authorities the fact that the Committee would take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3 today, which means that we have given our authorities to understand something that is not true. The delegations concerned and the Committee must be told of a decision to postpone so that in future we can properly inform our authorities. I think we should take a decision today in order to prevent such situations occurring again in future meetings. I think that will expedite our work.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I should like to end this discussion by making two comments. First, no one in the room is disputing the right of any delegation to ask for the postponement of a vote on any draft resolution at any time. The desire of the Chairman is that any request for the postponement come in as early as possible — as I said yesterday, I seriously encourage every delegation to make such a request the day before if possible. Secondly, on the matter of the identification of the delegation requesting the postponement, the Bureau will meet today and will take a decision on the procedure to be followed in that regard.

I call on the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Shin (Republic of Korea): I want to respond briefly to your remarks that the general statement on each cluster will take place only once. Yesterday my delegation asked for the opportunity to make a general statement on each cluster because my delegation had understood that a general statement was not allowed when the Committee was dealing with the draft resolutions. That was the first we knew about general statements being allowed when taking action on each draft resolution. We have asked for instructions from our capital, and we wish to have the chance to make a general statement, not today but when several of the clusters come round again.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): That is exactly what I have just said. In view of the fact that yesterday there was an imperfect understanding of the rule, today, but only today,

(spoke in English)

each delegation will have the opportunity to make a general statement on clusters that have already been considered. So today delegations will have another opportunity to make general statements on the clusters that we considered yesterday, but in the future I will ask delegations, for the good order of our work, to make their general statements whenever we take up a new cluster for the first time. Today if delegations want to make a general statement on cluster 1, they will be able to do it. That is for today because there was some misunderstanding yesterday on that. But any time that we come again to a cluster, we should avoid general statements. If delegations have a general statement to make, please make it the first time that we consider the particular cluster on which they want to speak. Is that clear?

I call on the representative of Canada.

Mr. Moher (Canada): I would like very much to support your efforts, Mr. Chairman, to move us forward efficiently and effectively here. However, I do have a similar concern to that raised by the Republic of Korea. As you well know, Mr. Chairman, and as I think everyone else in this room knows, there are several draft resolutions on which sensitive negotiations and discussions are continuing. Your explanation would mean that it would be difficult to make a general statement on cluster 1, for example, at this stage in our proceedings. I hope that my understanding is not erroneous, but as those discussions progress, if there is a desire by any delegation, including the Canadian delegation, to make a general statement under any of the clusters, in the light of the evolution of those discussions and negotiations, I would hope that you would be generous enough to allow that to take place. I do not wish to press you too strongly at this point, but could the Bureau consider that and let us know? To us it is a fairly important consideration.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I fully understand Canada's concerns, and of course the Chair and the Bureau will show the necessary flexibility on this question. Nevertheless, I would like us to stay as close as possible to the rules in general. Flexibility would allow all delegations to put forward their arguments at any point.

I call on the representative of Egypt.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): I should like to join those who have expressed support for your efforts, Mr. Chairman. We have full confidence in you. The remarks made by my colleague from Brazil were expressed in much better terms than I could express. You have wisely ruled that you will bring that matter to the attention of the Bureau this afternoon.

Here I would like to make two comments. When that issue is discussed, we must consider two matters. No request for a delay should be indefinite. We must fully understand the time sequence in which this kind of request is being seen. On draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3 there have been two requests for delays, and my delegation has been requesting that the draft resolution be put to a vote by consensus by the First Committee.

The second point: what relationship, if any, does the request for a delay have to a process of ongoing consultation? In the case of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, for example, and as I explained, there are no ongoing consultations. The text is sealed, lock, stock and barrel, so why the delay? There is no reason for the delay. There should be a reason for a delay. If there are ongoing consultations, that is fine. But in this case there are no ongoing consultations. I ask you, Mr. Chairman, to bear these caveats in mind when any request for a delay is discussed by the Bureau.

The Chairman *(interpretation from French):* I call on the representative of Mexico.

Mr. De Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation would like to make a general statement on cluster 1, but it cannot do so today for the simple reason that draft resolutions on cluster 1 keep coming forward. New draft amendments are coming out even today, and we are not in a position to make a statement on a cluster that is not yet complete. My delegation does, however, intend to make a general statement on the day when the draft resolutions in which it has an interest are to be adopted, not three or four days in advance. My delegation understands the concern of the Chair and the rule regarding one single statement being made at the beginning of consideration of each cluster rather than every time a cluster comes up. But that rule is balanced by another: at the beginning of each meeting, delegations can make general statements on any cluster that is to come up for discussion during that meeting.

Thus, I agree with you, Sir, that today is the last day that we can make general statements on cluster 1, provided we respect the rule that at the beginning of each meeting general statements can be made on any or all of the draft resolutions that are to come up for discussion at that meeting. That is how we balance the rules and make it possible for delegations to speak on those days when particular draft resolutions will come up for discussion, not a week in advance.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I think the answer I gave to Canada applies equally well to Mexico.

I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): First, I wish to support the point raised by the Ambassador of Egypt regarding the rule of deferral. Secondly, I would like to ask that the consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.17/Rev.1 be deferred until Monday because I need instructions from my capital.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I wish to point out that since informal paper No. 1 was distributed to delegations, requests for postponement have been made with regard to two draft resolutions: A/C.1/53/L.39, in cluster 6, and, as just proposed by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, A/C.1/53/L.17/Rev.1, in cluster 8.

We will now proceed to the consideration of the draft resolutions listed in the informal paper delegations have before them. I call first on delegations wishing to make general statements today on cluster 1, "Nuclear weapons".

If no delegation wishes to make a general statement on cluster 1 at this stage, we will now proceed to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37. I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I should like the name of my delegation to be added to the list of sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic): I would like to point out that in last preambular paragraph of the Arabic version of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37, some important words are missing. I ask the Secretariat to correct the Arabic text of the draft resolution.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Due note has been taken of your comments.

We will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas".

A separate vote has been requested on operative paragraph 3, which I shall read out:

(*spoke in English*)

> "*Welcomes* the steps taken to conclude further nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned and calls upon all States to consider all relevant proposals, including those reflected in its

resolutions on the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the Middle East and South Asia".

I hope that all delegations are clear on that.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): My delegation would like a separate vote on the last three words in operative paragraph 3, "and South Asia".

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I take note of the statement made by Pakistan. There is no very clear rule on this subject in the rules of procedure. We will vote on the three words as requested by Pakistan.

I call on the representative of South Africa on a point of order.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): I am sorry to get involved in this, because it does appeal to my rather strange sense of humour, which I think is fairly well known to you, Mr. Chairman, but this is the first time I have heard of this. Are we voting on the word "and" or "South" or "Asia"? It seems rather unclear to me what we will be voting on, but if the delegation of Pakistan insists on using the mechanism of the First Committee to vote on three words out of context, we would certainly be willing to continue with the exercise.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): There is no rule of procedure that would enable us to take a decision.

I call on the representative of Mexico on a point of order.

Mr. De Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from French*): I wish to draw the Committee's attention to rule 129 of the rules of procedure:

(*spoke in Spanish*)

> "A representative may move that parts of a proposal or of an amendment should be voted on separately".

Obviously, in paragraph 3 the reference to one region is part of a proposal. The delegation of Pakistan is quite entitled to call for a separate vote on that. However, another delegation is entitled to object, and rule 129 goes on to explain the procedure. Thus far there have been no objections. When the rule says "parts", it obviously does not mean whole paragraphs; it could be a sentence or even a phrase that constitutes a part of a proposal. As we said, the reference to a geographical area is a part of a proposal.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I just want to thank Ambassador De Icaza for once again coming to the rescue.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Andorra on a point of order.

Mr. Forner-Rovira (Andorra): I think the Ambassador of Pakistan is right and, if I understood correctly, what he is proposing is an amendment to operative paragraph 3 consisting of the elimination of the last few words. That to me is an amendment to operative paragraph 3, and we should consider it as such. It is up to you, Mr. Chairman, to make a ruling on whether we can proceed to vote on that amendment or if we need time to distribute the amendment. That is how we should understand the procedure.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The proposal of Pakistan is to vote on part of the proposal. If we follow the rules of procedure, there has to be an objection to the proposal made by Pakistan, and I do not see any such objection in the room, so we will proceed to vote on the proposal made by Pakistan.

I call on the representative of Chile on a point of order.

Mr. González (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I am sorry to say that my delegation does not agree with the way Mexico came to the rescue of Pakistan's proposal. We will not object to the procedure, but we would like to make our position on this subject abundantly clear.

We have to consider in context what the rule means when it refers to a "proposal". Otherwise we will be on the verge of a surrealistic situation in which someone who does not like a definite article in a given paragraph can ask for a separate vote - on the word "the", or "only", or "urges", or anything else. We would end up with an interminable voting process, and from a political standpoint this would completely erode the substance of a draft.

I believe that traditional, customary practice acquires a kind of valid legal force: we vote on proposals, which is understood to mean draft resolutions, and on their operative paragraphs separately when they present problems or controversies. Furthermore, we do not believe that this is the time or the place to propose the deletion of certain elements of a paragraph.

However, as I have said, we do not want to cause you problems, Mr. Chairman. We are prepared to go along with the voting, but we want to make our view very clear on this subject. In our opinion, we will not be doing justice to the Committee or to the results expected of it by the international community.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Naturally, the objective of the First Committee is not to lose itself in interminable discussions on procedure. That being said, I have not heard any objection to considering the proposal made by Pakistan. The proposal will therefore be put to a vote.

I call on the representative of Argentina.

Ms. Martinic (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I would just like to have a clarification. As I understood the Ambassador of Pakistan, he is proposing we take a separate vote on the words "and South Asia". The representative of Andorra offered an interpretation of Pakistan's request, saying that this might mean the elimination of these words. I am asking now exactly what we will be voting on.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I did not think that this would start procedural turmoil in the Committee. What we are asking for - and for the benefit of my colleague from Chile I would add that this is quite normal in the United Nations, particularly in the Third Committee, where we vote on words and phrases and even commas — is a separate vote on the last three words in operative paragraph 3. The three words are "and South Asia". We are asking only for a separate vote, not for a deletion. Those who favour this can say "yes", those who oppose these words can say "no", and others can abstain.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If I understood the Ambassador of Pakistan correctly, if the vote is in favour of the words "and South Asia", these three words are retained in paragraph 3. Do we agree on that?

I call on the representative of Israel.

Mr. Becher (Israel): If the outcome of this deliberation is that at the end we have operative paragraph 3 without the words "and South Asia", that will change the nature of this paragraph of the draft resolution. I will have to get new instructions from my Government and will have to ask for a deferral of the voting on the whole proposal.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I propose that we proceed in order. First we will vote — if I am given time to push this procedure through to the end - on the three words "and South Asia".

I now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on these three words before a decision is taken.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Pakistan has sought the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia for almost 25 years. Unfortunately, this objective has not received the kind of support that we would have wished from the international community and from the States concerned so as to translate it into reality. After the conduct of nuclear tests in South Asia this year and the declaration by one of the States that it is now a nuclear-weapon State, and consequent upon statements that nuclear weaponization has taken place and deployment is about to take place, my country considers that the goal of creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia is no longer a realistic prospect. We have therefore not proposed a draft resolution on this issue at this session of the General Assembly, and it was our advice to the sponsors of this draft resolution that these three words should be suppressed since the countries concerned no longer believe this objective to be a realistic one. Unfortunately, the sponsors have chosen to retain these words, which we believe are redundant, and therefore my delegation will be constrained to abstain in the voting on these three words referring to South Asia.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Canada on a point of order.

Mr. Moher (Canada): I am not responding to my friend the Ambassador of Pakistan on the substance of this in any way, but I want absolute clarity on what we are doing and under what rule. If we are acting under rule 130, then we are voting on an amendment. If we are voting under some other procedure, would the Chair please inform me what rule it is. That is my first question.

The second question I wish to put is, if the voting on this text is just to get a feeling of the political opinion in the room on these words, that is one thing. My understanding of the intervention of my colleague from Pakistan earlier was that he said he was not seeking an amendment. So if we vote on these three words, does the outcome of that vote determine whether these words stay in the draft resolution or not? If they go out, it is an amendment. Therefore, it would seem to me that rule 130 is the only rule that applies.

I must say, I find this procedure rather unique. Whether it is done in the Third Committee or not I leave to those who are more experienced than I, but before we go down this road I want a very clear understanding, first, of what rule we are acting under and, secondly, what the implications of the voting will be.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): As the Chair sees the situation, we are voting on a part of a proposal, under rule 129. If the vote that we are now going to hold is in favour of these three words — that is, if the Committee votes "yes" — then those three words will remain in operative paragraph 3. If the Committee votes "no" the three words will be deleted from operative paragraph 3.

(*spoke in English*)

If the Committee votes "yes" those three words will stay in operative paragraph 3. If the Committee votes "no" the words will be suppressed.

Is there any objection to this being put to the vote? If not, we will follow the procedure explained in rule 129.

I call on the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): I do not have an objection, but I am asking for further clarification. I thought that the Ambassador of Pakistan was not asking for an amendment. If he is not asking for an amendment, what is the difference?

The Chairman *(interpretation from French):* I call on the representative of Austria.

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): May I ask for a suspension of 10 minutes?

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If it is the wish of delegations, we will have a 10-minute break.

I call on the representative of Brazil on a point of order.

Mr. Felicio (Brazil): I am afraid, Mr. Chairman, you cannot suspend the meeting because the voting process has already started and you have already given the floor to the Ambassador of Pakistan, who made an explanation of vote, so we will have to continue the voting process.

The Chairman *(interpretation from French):* I call on the representative of Mexico.

Mr. De Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): May I draw your attention, Mr. Chairman, to rule 128:

> "After the Chairman has announced the beginning of voting no representative shall interrupt the voting except on a point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting."

That would exclude points of order to do with matters other than the conduct of the voting. It excludes points of order regarding suspension, postponement, and so on.

(*spoke in French*)

Voting cannot be interrupted, no matter what your friends from the secretariat say. I have never seen such a thing before. One cannot interrupt a voting process that has already begun.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): It seems that Austria's request cannot be accepted under the rules of procedure. We are in the midst of the voting procedure on those three words. I have explained the consequences of the voting. The Ambassador of Pakistan has explained his position before the voting. Does any other delegation wish to explain its position or vote before the voting? Are the consequences of the voting clear in everybody's mind?

I call on the representative of Canada.

Mr. Moher (Canada): I am sorry to interrupt you, Mr. Chairman. I think I interrupted you just when you were going to help me out. I want the question put very clearly.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Let me repeat what I have already said several times. If delegations vote "no" it means the three words will be deleted. Is that clear? If delegations vote "yes" the three words will be retained in the text. Is that clear?

I call on the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I do not want to give an explanation of vote before the voting, but I am not yet clear. If we vote "yes", does that mean the words will be retained or deleted?

The Chairman: If delegations vote "yes" those three words will be retained in operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution. That means that the operative paragraph does not change. If delegations vote "no" those words will be suppressed and the operative paragraph will have been changed. Is that clear?

I call on the representative of Syria.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic): There is a proposal by the Ambassador of Pakistan for a vote to delete the three words from this draft resolution. That was the first proposal, and it is still the same. So if the voting is on the three words the proposal is to delete. If we vote "yes" that means the words will be deleted, because we are voting on the proposal to delete the three words.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I should like to say that as a diplomat I, like other representatives, have a side that enjoys semantic debates, but we need to move ahead. We have not yet adopted a single draft resolution and it is now a quarter past eleven.

However, we must be clear about the consequences of the vote. I repeat, if delegations vote "yes" the three words will be retained in the operative paragraph. If delegations vote "no" the three words will be deleted from the operative paragraph. I do not believe I could be any clearer than that.

I call on the representative of China.

Mr. Li Changhe (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): I completely respect and trust your judgement. However, the Chinese delegation would like to explain its own understanding of this issue. The proposal of the Pakistani delegation is to have a separate vote. That separate vote will allow delegations to indicate their views on a certain paragraph, and specifically on these three words.

My delegation is of the view that whether the majority of delegations vote in favour of or against, these three words ought to be retained in this operative paragraph. I stress again that in my view, regardless of whether the final result is "yes" or "no", these three words should still be retained in operative paragraph 3. The result of the voting simply records the positions of different delegations on this matter. That is our understanding of this matter, but of course we respect your decision, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I repeat, the Chair's position is that we are now going to vote without any more statements on procedure. If delegations vote "yes" the words will be retained; if delegations vote "no" the words will be deleted. The voting will now begin.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will proceed to vote first on the last three words, "and South Asia", of operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37. The draft resolution, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas", was introduced by the representative of Brazil at the 17th meeting, on 28 October 1998. Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2/Add.1. The following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: the Islamic Republic of Iran and Nigeria.

A "yes" vote will mean the three words will be retained in the paragraph. A "no" vote means those three words will be deleted.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Bhutan, India

Abstaining:

Algeria, Bangladesh, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Estonia, France, Israel, Latvia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan, Viet Nam

The last three words of operative paragraph 3, "and South Asia", of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37 were retained by 118 votes to 2, with 21 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no delegation wishes to explain its vote or position on the three words just retained, we shall now proceed to the voting on operative paragraph 3 in the same form as it appears, that is, with the three words "and South Asia".

(*spoke in English*)

If no delegation wishes to explain its position or vote before a decision is taken on operative paragraph 3, I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to the voting on operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burundi, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

India

Abstaining:

Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cuba, Estonia, France, Iceland, Israel, Latvia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Uzbekistan

Operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37 was retained by 125 votes to 1, with 18 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their positions or votes on the paragraph just retained.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): My delegation was constrained to abstain in the voting on operative paragraph 3 because of the earlier vote to retain the words "and South Asia". We, as is well known, support the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, but as this paragraph itself states in the opening phrase, such treaties have to be reached on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region. In the vote taken on the words "and South Asia", virtually all the States of that region abstained, which means there is no agreement in South Asia now for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In those circumstances, the retention of those words is in direct contradiction to the earlier phrase in the same operative paragraph which calls for the establishment of such zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region. That contradiction is a flaw that cannot be reconciled in the present phraseology. Therefore, my delegation was constrained to abstain in the voting on the entire paragraph despite our support for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones, including in the Middle East.

Mr. King (United States of America): The United States abstained in the voting on the last three words of operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37 because the request made by Pakistan has raised a major issue. That issue is whether the States of the region desire a nuclear-weapon-free zone on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at. It appears that they do not. As desirable as such a zone might be for the rest of us, we believe that the general principle must govern. For the same reason, since the last three words remain in operative paragraph 3 the United States similarly abstained in the voting on operative paragraph 3.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no other delegation wishes to explain its position or vote, we will proceed to the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37 as a whole.

If no members wish to explain their position or vote before a decision is taken on the draft resolution as a whole, I shall call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37 as a whole.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

France, Monaco, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Bhutan, Bulgaria, Estonia, Georgia, Hungary, India, Israel, Latvia, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37, as a whole, was adopted by 129 votes to 4, with 14 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Richier (France) (*interpretation from French*): I am speaking on behalf of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to explain our position on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas". Our three delegations voted against this draft resolution because, despite our regular consultations and work with the sponsors, it still does not adequately address our main concern and still contains a fundamental ambiguity. Let me explain why.

We remain concerned that the thrust of the draft resolution is to prepare the ground for the establishment of the southern hemisphere as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Since all land territory in the southern hemisphere, with the exception of a few small islands, is already covered by nuclear-weapon-free zones, the only new areas that such a zone could cover would be the high seas. Many delegations assert that this is not the intention of the draft resolution and point out that it makes reference to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. But if the new zone will not cover the high seas, then what will it add to the existing zones? Thus we can only conclude that the true aim of some sponsors is indeed to create a new zone that covers international waters. Such a step would be inconsistent with international law and unacceptable to all delegations that respect the law of the sea.

Despite that and other, lesser problems, we acknowledge that the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37 made some useful improvements to this year's text, although these changes were still not enough to overcome our general concern about the purpose of the draft resolution. We hope that next year the sponsors will be able to offer a text that satisfies all of us. We stand ready to continue to work with them with to that end.

I wish to emphasize that our vote on this draft resolution should in no way call into question our firm commitment to the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Pelindaba and the Antarctic, nor do we have any objections in principle to the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones, which can make an important contribution to both regional and global security provided they are supported by all States in the region concerned and are embodied in appropriate treaties that include provisions for full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

Mr. Li Changhe (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): China has all along respected and supported efforts by countries to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at. On the basis of this position, China signed and ratified the relevant protocols to the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Pelindaba, Rarotonga and the Antarctic. Meanwhile, China actively supports the countries of the South-East Asian region to establish such a zone, and we are consulting with the countries of that region with regard to the problems of the protocols so as to be able to sign the protocol as soon as possible.

My delegation believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is significant for the promotion of nuclear disarmament, the prevention of nuclear proliferation and the promotion of international and regional peace and security. My delegation also believes that any nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty should be in line with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and recognized international norms. The zones should be established by the countries concerned on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by them and in the light of the practical situation of the countries of the region concerned.

The scope of such a zone should not cover the continental shelf and the special economic zone, nor should it cover areas whose sovereignty and maritime rights are the subject of dispute with countries outside the zone. Countries of the zone should not shirk their obligations using the excuse of military alliances.

My delegation notes that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.37, entitled "Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas", makes reference to the applicable principles and rules of international law relating to the freedom of the high seas and the rights of passage through maritime space, including those of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

It is our understanding that this draft resolution does not seek to create legal obligations additional to those already contained in the existing nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties.

For these reasons, my delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution.

Ms. Kunadi (India): With regard to operative paragraph 3 of the draft resolution, which refers to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia, it has been our consistent policy that the proposal for nuclear-weapon-free zones can be based only on arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. There is no consensus on the proposal for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia. There is thus a contradiction which operative paragraph 3 ignores. Therefore, we called for a separate vote and voted against that operative paragraph.

The contradictions in the draft resolution become even more apparent when the reference to a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia is seen in the context of recent developments. Therefore, operative paragraph 3 does not correspond to reality. We understand that it has been retained at the insistence of one sponsor of the draft resolution that is not from South Asia, even when the delegation that had originally sought its inclusion had given its approval for deletion. This makes a mockery of the stipulation that the arrangements should be freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. On this analogy, India could just as well propose that East Asia and Europe should be added after South Asia.

This operative paragraph distorts the coherence and consistency of the draft resolution. We have therefore abstained in the voting on the draft resolution as a whole.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

The Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47.

A recorded vote has been requested.

(*spoke in English*)

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament" was introduced by the representative of Myanmar at the 21st meeting, on 2 November 1998. Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are contained in document A/C.1/53/INF/2 and Add.1. The following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Bhutan and the Republic of Angola.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Chile, Cyprus, Japan, Kazakhstan, Malta, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, San Marino, South Africa, Ukraine, Uzbekistan

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47 was adopted by 87 votes to 40, with 15 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegations of Bhutan and Côte d'Ivoire informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call now on those representatives who wish to explain their positions or votes on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): I should like to explain Japan's abstention in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47, entitled "Nuclear disarmament".

I have already referred, in my explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.14, to Japan's fervent desire that the use of nuclear weapons should not be repeated and its firm belief that continuous efforts should be made towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Having said that, as far as draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47 is concerned, I would like to state that the idea contained in this draft resolution, especially the element of a specified framework of time for the elimination of nuclear weapons, does not command the support of all the nuclear-weapon States and many other non-nuclear-weapon States. Therefore, Japan cannot regard this draft resolution as having been formulated on the basis of appropriate considerations and consultations.

This year again, the draft resolution on this subject does not refer to the highly important Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and its review process. The NPT, in our view, is one of the most effective, realistic and solid frameworks for the promotion of nuclear disarmament. Rather than embracing the idea of the elimination of nuclear weapons within a specified framework of time, the Government of Japan intends to pursue the goal of realizing a world free of nuclear weapons through the following set of efforts.

First, with regard to the reduction of nuclear weapons among the nuclear-weapon States, the Government of Japan intends to urge the Russian Federation and the United States of America to pursue their efforts in the START process. In this connection, Japan would like to continue to play its part in assisting the Russian Federation with the dismantlement of its nuclear arsenals. Japan would also like to request the other nuclear-weapon States to make further efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament.

Secondly, with regard to multilateral endeavours, the Government of Japan intends to make efforts for, first, the success of the NPT Review Conference scheduled for the year 2000; secondly, the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); thirdly, the advancement and early conclusion of negotiations for the fissile material cut-off treaty; and, fourthly, the commencement of multilateral discussions concerning possible measures following a fissile material cut-off treaty.

Thirdly, in view of the substantial difference of opinion in the international community on how to advance nuclear disarmament, the Government of Japan will continue its endeavour to bridge the gap and nurture common understandings among States for the shared cause of realizing a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The draft resolution also contains some new elements which do not command our support.

Mr. González (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): With regard to our vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47, Chile has always advocated preferential treatment for nuclear disarmament from the international community. For that reason we agree with most of the references and ideas contained in the draft resolution, including those relating to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, the Conventions on chemical and biological weapons and the declaration entitled "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: the need for a new agenda".

We wish to highlight in particular operative paragraph 7, which makes a clear appeal to the nuclear-weapon States

> "pending the achievement of a total ban on nuclear weapons through a Nuclear Weapons Convention, to agree on an internationally and legally binding instrument of the joint undertaking not to be the first to use nuclear weapons; and calls upon all States to conclude an internationally and legally binding instrument on security assurances of non-use and threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States".

However, we do not agree with certain aspects of the draft resolution, which we feel do not contribute to the achievement of the goals of the draft resolution as a whole. They do not facilitate effective dialogue making it possible to make progress towards negotiations on prohibiting the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons and towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. There are certain preconditions that would unfortunately make these delicate negotiations more difficult and would not break the impasse that now exists in this field. I refer in particular to the requirement that there be strict timetables for the major stages of such negotiations. Therefore, very much to our regret, we have had to abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47 although we agree broadly with its objectives.

Mr. Li Changhe (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.47. China supports the main thrust and objectives of the draft resolution and shares many of the views of the non-aligned and non-nuclear-weapon States on the issue of nuclear disarmament. We are all in favour of the complete prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons. We all believe, just as in the case of the complete prohibition of chemical and biological weapons, in the imposition of a complete prohibition of nuclear weapons so as to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world at an early date. We are all opposed to the policy of nuclear deterrence, which is based on first use of nuclear weapons. We are all in favour of negotiations to conclude an international legal instrument providing guarantees against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

The Chinese delegation would like to take this opportunity to point out that nuclear-weapon States have different historical backgrounds, different kinds of regimes for developing nuclear weapons and different nuclear-weapon policies. China, under very special historical conditions, was compelled to develop a small number of nuclear weapons for the sole purpose of self-defence. It has never posed a threat to any country.

As a nuclear-weapon State, China has never shirked its responsibility and obligations for nuclear disarmament. On the very first day that China possessed nuclear weapons, it declared solemnly that at no time and under no circumstances would China be the first to use nuclear weapons.

China also unconditionally made a commitment not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones. China is the only nuclear-weapon State that has made and abided by such a commitment. China has never participated in the nuclear arms race and has never deployed nuclear weapons outside its own territories, or used or threatened to use nuclear weapons against other countries.

This position of China's is highly significant for the prevention of nuclear war and has also played a positive role in promoting the nuclear disarmament process and in reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation. We are ready to work together with other countries in a joint effort to establish a nuclear-weapon-free world at an early date. We believe that specific steps and timetables for nuclear disarmament should be worked out by the international community within the framework of negotiations on a convention completely prohibiting nuclear weapons.

The countries that are in possession of the largest and most sophisticated nuclear arsenals have a long way to go in nuclear disarmament. They should continue to fulfil their special responsibilities for nuclear disarmament. I should like to point out in addition, as regards the specific nuclear disarmament measures contained in the draft resolution, that in the current international situation conditions for their implementation do not yet exist.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

We shall now take up draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, which is in cluster 4, "Conventional weapons".

(*spoke in English*)

If no delegation wishes to make a general statement on cluster 4, "Conventional weapons", we shall proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction".

A recorded vote has been requested.

I call on the representative of Lebanon, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote before a decision is taken.

Mr. Ayoub (Lebanon) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Lebanon supports the principle on which the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction is based. My delegation would like to thank States such as Canada, Belgium, Norway and Austria for their efforts in holding preparatory meetings to draft the Convention and have it signed in Ottawa last year.

However, Lebanon has not signed the Convention to date because Israel continues to occupy a portion of our territory and rejects the immediate and unconditional application of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), adopted on 19 March 1978. We request all countries concerned not to limit their mine-clearance assistance to countries parties to the Convention alone, but to extend financial and technical assistance for mine clearance to all States that have need of it without any exception. The Lebanese delegation, because of its interest in protecting human lives, and appreciating and respecting the noble efforts some States have made and continue to make, will vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", was introduced by the representative of

Canada at the 19th meeting, on 30 October 1998. Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2 and Add.1. In this connection, a note by the Secretariat concerning the responsibilities entrusted to the Secretary-General under the draft resolution is contained in document A/C.1/53/L.60.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Azerbaijan, China, Cuba, Egypt, India, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Israel, Kazakhstan, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Morocco, Myanmar, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Syrian Arab Republic, United States of America, Viet Nam

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33 was adopted by 124 votes to none, with 19 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Kuwait informed the Secretariat that it had intended not to participate in the voting.]

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Reimaa (Finland): In the context of the decision just taken on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", I would like to state that Finland is committed to the objective of achieving the goal of a total and effective ban on anti-personnel landmines. That is also the objective of the draft resolution.

Finland has welcomed the Ottawa Convention as an important step towards a worldwide ban on anti-personnel landmines. The early entry into force of the Convention contributes further to these expectations. It is in that context that Finland voted in favour of the draft resolution and thereby supported the draft resolution without prejudice to its position with regard to operative paragraph 1 of that draft resolution.

The global normative framework regarding anti-personnel landmines will be further strengthened with the entry into force of the strengthened Protocol II of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects. Finland also believes that the Conference on Disarmament should continue to address the issue with a particular focus on transfers of anti-personnel landmines to complement and support the Ottawa Convention.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Pakistan has been a long-standing adherent of the United Nations Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), which includes the Protocol on restrictions governing the use of anti-personnel landmines. Our commitment to observe its rules reflects our conviction that the Convention and its Protocols represent a bulwark against the indiscriminate use of certain conventional weapons, including anti-personnel landmines. Even before the Convention came into existence, Pakistan had a war-time record of strict observance of humanitarian laws which were later embodied in the Convention and its Protocols. Our adherence to the Convention and its Protocols was therefore without hesitation or delay.

Pakistan, unfortunately, has a long border and lives under the constant threat of the use of force. We are therefore constrained at this time to have resort to anti-personnel landmines for the purposes of our defensive strategy. We believe that at this moment the international community could usefully focus on, first, the universal adherence to the new Protocol II of the CCW because we believe this Protocol will lead to the resolution of almost all the humanitarian problems that have resulted from the widespread and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines.

Secondly, the international community, especially those nations in a financial position to do so, must support an invigorated programme to eliminate landmines which have been laid in the past and which are responsible for an estimated 25,000 fatalities each year.

Thirdly, we believe that the Conference on Disarmament could also take some steps to promote progress towards the ultimate goal of prohibiting anti-personnel landmines without jeopardizing the security of States.

Given this approach and our continued reliance on anti-personnel landmines for the purposes of our defensive strategy, my delegation has been constrained to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution while applauding and appreciating the noble objectives it seeks to promote.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): In explaining Egypt's abstention, I would like to state that the problem of landmines in Egypt dates back to the 1940s, when the warring Allied and Axis forces of the Second World War left behind 17.5 million landmines and pieces of unexploded ordnance in the area of El Alamein. That number has subsequently risen, as a result of the wars with Israel, to 22.7 million landmines covering an area of 228,000 hectares in Egypt. Obstacles impeding our efforts to clear these areas include the enormous size of the area in which the mines are planted, the metal oxidization of the trigger mechanisms of the mines, rendering them more dangerous, and the sudden movements of sand, which increase the depth of these mines and thus hamper normal detection and removal procedures. These factors caused 8,317 casualties in the period from 1945 to 1996.

Although Egypt did not take part in planting these landmines, the Egyptian armed forces successfully removed 11 million of them during the period 1981 to 1991 without any foreign assistance. This pioneering operation took a heavy toll on our limited capabilities and has, as a result, diverted much-needed resources from other sectors. There is therefore a dire need for extensive assistance, including special demining equipment.

Allow me now to say a few words on the draft resolution under consideration. Although the Egyptian Government supports the humanitarian objective which inspired the conception of and led to the conclusion of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, as well as subsequent draft resolutions submitted by Canada to the General Assembly, Egypt continues to see this Convention in the light of certain concerns. Before listing these concerns, we wish to laud the efforts made by Canada in this respect.

The concerns can be summarized as follows: first, the Convention did not lay down a binding legal framework recognizing the responsibility of States that have deployed landmines in the territories of other States, and hence did not provide for commitments by these States to remove those mines. As a result, the Convention did not adequately deal with or provide for assurances in the field of assistance in landmine clearance. This prompted the adoption of resolution 1983/30, entitled "Injurious effects of anti-personnel landmines", without a vote by the fiftieth session of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, on 26 August 1998, in Geneva. This resolution urges, in operative paragraph 5,

> "all countries responsible for the laying of anti-personnel landmines in foreign territories to assume full responsibility for the necessary mine clearance operations and to cooperate with the host countries for this purpose in every possible way, in particular developing countries".

Secondly, the Convention did not take into consideration the legitimate right of States to self-defence, as provided in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, or the legitimate right to protect national security by all means, including the use of mines under certain conditions and demarcations, especially in the absence of other financially feasible alternatives. That is a matter of cardinal importance for countries with extended and otherwise-difficult-to-protect borders prone to terrorist infiltration, smuggling of arms and explosives, banditry, drug-trafficking, and so on.

Although some addressed the issue of a so-called viable alternative to anti-personnel landmines, no operational measure or conceivable solution was presented to help address the concern of States which exhibited a readiness to make progress towards a total prohibition but, at the same time, needed a substitute method to protect their own national security. As time went by, these demands went unheeded. It also became evident that the means to produce and use such a viable alternative was restricted to only a few States, thereby creating an asymmetry in the security requirements among regional States. Those that needed this new and advanced form of high technology necessary for self-defence had to fall victim to a new form of dependency by relying heavily on extensive imports from limited producers. In the interim, national security imperatives were left behind, ignored and hanging loose.

Thirdly, despite all this, Egypt chose not to boycott but attended, and actively participated in as an observer, all meetings associated with the Ottawa process. Egyptian delegations comprising joint representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Defence participated in all preparatory meetings, such as those held in Budapest, Geneva, Vienna, Oslo, and so on. In Brussels, Egypt introduced a non-paper which underscored concerns previously highlighted. In all such meetings the Egyptian delegation spoke, distributed pamphlets and special written and photographic material, explaining the magnitude of the problem and our earnest request for international recognition and support. We spoke very vehemently of our effort and our contacts with the Office of the former Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and with those directly concerned, as well as of our earnest request to parties to shoulder their responsibilities.

As mentioned earlier, the enormous number of landmines planted in such vast areas of my country has altered the demographic edifice by hindering economic development. The problem presents itself today more acutely than ever, as the population of Egypt grows and the need for expansion outside the narrow Nile valley into the surrounding affected areas becomes a vital necessity. Almost 97 per cent of the population of Egypt lives in the area surrounding the Nile valley, which constitutes less than 6 per cent of the total land mass of Egypt. Egypt, which historically is the gift of the Nile, cannot continue to harbour more than 60 million individuals around a thin Nile valley.

Recently the Government has followed a "reach out" policy for new, uncharted areas implementing land reclamation, socio-economic development and agricultural projects. Furthermore, these crowded areas offer great potential for economic development due to favourable soil formation, the availability of subterranean water and seasonal rainfall that allows for pastures. Coupled with that, there are enormous prospects for oil and industrial expansion in the future. The area is also dotted with many significant ancient Roman sites dating back to the Byzantine period. The sites, a must for tourists, are not only the heritage of a single civilization but are in reality an asset for humanity. Not many of us know that the present beautiful city of Medina el Alamein, on Egypt's north-western Mediterranean coast, was originally a seaport that carried trade from Egypt's oases to the seaports of Europe.

Although we associated ourselves with the humanitarian aspect as well as with the need for a total ban on anti-personnel landmines, we could not comprehend the argument, forcefully put to us in every conceivable way, that certain areas deserve more attention than others, particularly the argument that "mines in deserts don't hurt, nor do they deserve immediate attention". Such a myopic vision makes a mockery of the axiom that development is one whole, indivisible process. Let me quote a number of eye-witness references of German soldiers belonging to the African battalion who were present at the great battle of El Alamein. They stated in Egypt, on 20 October 1998, in the ceremonies held in El Alamein, that they "were horrified at the impact of landmines levied cruelly on children, youngsters and the elderly". I invite those who make such arguments to read the article published in *The Guardian* on 9 December 1997 entitled "The Devil's Garden".

With regard to the methodology and machinery used to arrive at the Convention, the draft text was achieved outside the aegis of the Conference on Disarmament, which is the sole United Nations multilateral negotiating disarmament forum. Bypassing the Conference on Disarmament weakened and defeated the democratic process of multilateralism as well as the meaning of collective effort. Despite all that, we hope that this will soon be remedied and that the issue will find a proper place on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Phua (Singapore): Singapore's position on anti-personnel landmines has been clear and open. My country supports and will continue to support all initiatives against the indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, especially when directed at innocent civilians. To this end, in May 1996 Singapore declared a two-year moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines without self-neutralizing mechanisms. In February this year Singapore decided to expand the scope of its moratorium on the export of mines to cover all manner of anti-personnel landmines, not just those without self-neutralizing mechanisms. In addition, this moratorium is now effective for an indefinite future period.

At the same time, like several other countries, Singapore firmly believes that the legitimate security concerns and right to self-defence of any State cannot be disregarded. Therefore, my country is of the view that a blanket ban on all types of anti-personnel landmines might be counter-productive, especially if such a move might possibly compromise the security of its users.

Mr. Amar (Morocco) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation would like to explain its vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction". Morocco supports the humanitarian objectives of this draft resolution and applauds Canada's efforts regarding anti-personnel landmines. Morocco continues to see draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33 in the light of certain concerns regarding its security in the southern provinces. My delegation wishes to reiterate the position Morocco expressed with regard to the Convention during the voting on the First Committee's draft resolutions in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly at the fifty-second session. That position explains why my delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, on anti-personnel landmines.

Mr. Lee (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to make a brief comment in explanation of its vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction".

My country experienced tremendous suffering because of the high-intensity conflict during the Korean War. In this regard, we have attached particular importance to the development of international humanitarian law and have upheld its basic principles. In this endeavour, anti-personnel landmines are no exception.

In joining international efforts to prevent suffering from the indiscriminate use of mines, my Government declared last year, and has implemented, an indefinite extension of its moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines. In the same vein, my country has also actively participated in United Nations mine action programmes, including through financial contributions, and will continue to do so. We firmly believe that a comprehensive and coordinated approach with the United Nations as a focal point will enable the international community to address its concern over the tremendous human and material loss caused by anti-personnel landmines.

Unfortunately, however, my Government was not in a position to join the Ottawa Convention designed to impose a total ban on the use of anti-personnel landmines, given our paramount security interests. As explained on many previous occasions, the use of anti-personnel landmines is indispensable for the defence of the demilitarized zone in the Korean peninsula, one of the most heavily armed areas in the world. Landmines are used there as a major defensive weapon in a specifically limited area. Thus, we cannot forgo immediately the use of anti-personnel landmines until the threat to our security is removed. We consider it desirable for the international community to take a more practical step towards the minimization of suffering caused by anti-personnel landmines, namely, by adopting a legally binding and universally applicable instrument aimed at banning the transfer of all kinds of anti-personnel landmines. My delegation sincerely hopes that the Conference on Disarmament can start negotiations on such a legal instrument at the earliest possible date.

For the foregoing reasons, my delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33.

Mr. Sungar (Turkey): I would like to share with the Committee the considerations that led my delegation to cast a "yes" vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction".

Turkey has unique security concerns which have been carefully factored into our principled policy on anti-personnel landmines. While fully conscious of the human suffering and casualties caused by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines, Turkey's long land borders need to be protected not only against trespassing but also to combat terrorism, drug-trafficking and illicit arms-trafficking.

Moreover, among the reasons we were initially unable to sign the Ottawa Convention was the fact that our neighbours to the south and south-east chose not to be parties to the Convention. During the negotiations, Turkey unsuccessfully sought the inclusion of an exception clause to the Convention which would free States parties of their treaty obligations vis-à-vis their common borders with those countries which had not become parties to the Convention.

It was precisely these reasons that compelled Turkey to abstain in the voting on the draft resolutions on this subject for the past two years and that prevented Turkey from signing the Ottawa Convention last year. We explained then and categorically state now that Turkey associates itself with the fundamental humanitarian considerations which have motivated the leaders of the Ottawa process. We welcome the Convention's entry into force on 1 March 1999. With the humanitarian aspects of the anti-personnel landmine problem in mind, we put into effect in 1996 a national moratorium banning the export and transfer of anti-personnel landmines. As a renewed expression of our determination to contribute to the ongoing efforts of the international community aimed at preventing further casualties, and our commitment to humanitarian objectives, we announced at the start of this Committee's meeting on 15 October our decision to extend that moratorium for another three years commencing from its expiry. We do not exclude the possibility of our signing the Ottawa Convention in the future, as and when our security concerns have been comprehensively and satisfactorily addressed. It is with these very considerations in mind that today we opted to vote in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33.

The fact that some of the major historical producers and users of anti-personnel landmines have chosen to remain outside the Ottawa Convention — at this stage, at least — and that they have not been in a position to support past General Assembly draft resolutions and the one just adopted by the Committee underlines the need to deploy additional efforts with a view to bringing these countries closer to the norms set by the Convention. My Government continues to maintain that the Conference on Disarmament is the competent forum for negotiations that would address the security concerns of those States, enabling them to join an eventual ban to be achieved in stages.

In this connection, the Special Coordinator on anti-personnel landmines, Ambassador John Campbell of Australia, in his report on 27 August 1998, stated that agreement should be possible in the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate a ban on transfers of landmines and that such an agreement, if adopted by the major traditional producers and traders of anti-personnel landmines not yet parties to the Ottawa treaty, would represent a major and important step forward. We share this judgement and hope that others will also support the establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on a ban on transfers at an early date in the 1999 session of the Conference.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The position of my delegation on the question of anti-personnel landmines is well known, and in particular our position on the Convention on the prohibition of such weapons, which is the subject of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33. For that reason I will not explain my vote in much detail.

For Cuba the ultimate objective of negotiations on anti-personnel landmines has always been to guarantee maximum protection for the civilian population, not to limit the military capacity of States to protect their sovereignty and territorial integrity in keeping with the right to self-defence, as recognized in Article 51 of the United Nations Charter. The absence of any acknowledgement of this legitimate right in draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33 is the basic reason for Cuba's abstention in the voting on the draft resolution. My country, which for nearly four decades has been fully exposed to a policy of aggression and hostility from the most economically, politically and militarily powerful country in the world, cannot afford to join in accepting the challenge of renouncing these types of weapons for the defence of its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Cuba continues to fully support all efforts that, while maintaining the necessary balance between humanitarian concerns and national security, are aimed at eliminating the terrible effects on the civilian populations of many countries brought on by the irresponsible and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): With regard to my delegation's vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", the Islamic Republic of Iran, as a country affected by millions of landmines, supports any genuine initiative that deals with a ban on all types of anti-personnel landmines. Accordingly, my Government declared a moratorium on the export of anti-personnel landmines and expedited the process of acceding to the strengthened Protocol II of the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects.

However, since in our view the Ottawa Convention does not adequately address both security and humanitarian aspects of the landmines issue, we are not in a position to join that Convention at present. For this reason my delegation abstained in the voting on the draft resolution. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to start negotiations on a comprehensive and universally acceptable agreement on this subject.

Ms. Kunadi (India): My delegation wishes to share with the Committee the considerations which led it to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution. India remains committed to the objective of a non-discriminatory and universal ban on anti-personnel landmines. This objective can be achieved through a phased approach that enjoys international consensus and by addressing humanitarian concerns and the legitimate defence requirements of States. India has expressed its willingness to participate, in forthcoming international efforts based on such an approach, as it has participated in the past. We believe that the phased approach commends itself as a confidence-building process enabling States, especially those with long borders, to remain sensitive to their legitimate security needs while facilitating meaningful international efforts for addressing the critical humanitarian crisis that has resulted from long years of indiscriminate transfers and use of anti-personnel landmines.

We also believe that the process of the complete elimination of anti-personnel landmines will be facilitated by the availability of alternative non-lethal technologies that can perform cost-effectively the legitimate defensive role of anti-personnel landmines. We should also address and dedicate greater efforts to the critical and interrelated issues of mine clearance and mine-victim assistance.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, entitled "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction", as we did in the voting on resolution 52/38 A, on the same issue, adopted at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly.

Algeria signed the Ottawa Convention and takes note of its forthcoming entry into force. We support a total prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines. Therefore, we fully subscribe to and support the humanitarian and other objectives of the process. We remain committed to the objective of a universal prohibition of anti-personnel mines. We believe, nevertheless, that this objective will be attained only when the process has the support of the entire international community, when all States have joined the Convention, particularly those that produce landmines, and when adherence to it is really universal.

Mr. Li Changhe (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): China abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, and I should now like to explain our vote and state our views.

The Chinese Government has always taken seriously the humanitarian concerns caused by landmines. At the same time, we believe that the right approach to this question is to accommodate both humanitarian and security concerns. We hold that without compromising the legitimate right to self-defence and the principle of undiminished security for all countries, there should be appropriate and reasonable restriction on the use of landmines so as to eliminate their indiscriminate effects on innocent civilians worldwide. Therefore, we have different views on the Ottawa Convention and on the draft resolution on the Convention, A/C.1/53/L.33.

China believes that the harm done by landmines to civilians should be addressed with two objectives in mind: appropriate and reasonable restrictions on the use of landmines and the strengthening of international mine-clearing efforts.

With regard to the first objective, the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects and its amended landmine Protocol could constitute a guarantee for the achievement of the first objective. China actively participated in the negotiations on the Protocol. China has ratified it, and I am very pleased to inform the Committee that this afternoon China will deposit the instrument of ratification with the Secretary-General. We hope that more countries will accede to the Protocol so that those countries that cannot give up the use of landmines for self-defence will be able to impose further restrictions on the use of landmines so as to prevent harm to civilians.

With regard to the second objective, the Chinese Government has actively joined international mine-clearing efforts and has provided assistance to mine-affected countries, thus contributing within its capability to the post-conflict reconstruction of the countries concerned.

In November 1997 the President of the People's Republic of China solemnly declared that China would actively support international cooperation in mine-clearing efforts. Despite the fact that since the beginning of this year China has suffered from the worst flooding of the century, and its disaster relief work has imposed a huge financial burden on the Government, China not long ago formulated its international mine-clearing assistance programme so as to provide help, within its capabilities, to mine-affected countries. That programme includes the following: first, this year we are pledging $100,000 to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Clearance earmarked for activities in Bosnia and Herzegovina; secondly, in 1999 and 2000 China will cooperate with the relevant agencies of the United Nations to hold two training courses in China; and thirdly, by 2001 China will pledge mine-detecting and mine-clearing equipment to the United Nations Voluntary Trust Fund, earmarked for use in those countries that receive our training. We believe that with the joint efforts of the Chinese Government and the relevant agencies of the United Nations this mine-clearing programme can be implemented in a satisfactory manner so that more land in mine-affected countries can be cleared of mines.

Mr. Than (Myanmar): I should like to place on record the position of my delegation on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33, relating to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. Myanmar supports the banning exports, transfers and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines. We respect the decision of the countries that have signed and ratified the Convention on anti-personnel landmines. Myanmar did not participate in the Ottawa process, nor is it a signatory or State party to the Convention. We believe that we should take a step-by-step approach to this question. What is actually causing death and injury to innocent children, women and men is the indiscriminate use of the anti-personnel landmines. Transfers and exports of anti-personnel landmines also contribute to their proliferation, thereby increasing the chances of their indiscriminate use.

The transfer and indiscriminate use of anti-personnel landmines is the real issue that needs to be urgently addressed, and such transfers and use should be banned in an international legal instrument. As all of us are aware, a significant number of the signatory countries still have reservations on the issue of anti-personnel landmines. It is obvious that a consensus does not yet exist among Member States of the United Nations at present on placing a total ban on anti-personnel landmines. It is also worth noting that other international agreements on humanitarian law have evolved out of consensus among States on banning the use of certain inhumane weapons, and the case of anti-personnel landmines is conspicuous by the absence of such a consensus.

Apart from being a humanitarian issue, this is certainly a disarmament subject. It is therefore imperative that in dealing with this issue the legitimate security interests of States be fully taken into account. In this regard, we should like to stress here that the legitimate right of every State to self-defence in matters of its national security must be recognized and respected. We are also in favour of further pursuing the issue of anti-personnel landmines in the Conference on Disarmament, which we believe is the appropriate forum to negotiate agreements on such issues.

For these reasons my delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.33.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

The Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.30, in cluster 6, "Confidence-building measures, including transparency in armaments".

(*spoke in English*)

I now call on those delegations wishing to make general statement on that cluster.

Mr. Ayoub (Lebanon) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation has considered carefully the draft resolutions on transparency of military expenditures and transparency in armaments, contained in draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.30, L.39 and L.43. The Lebanese delegation wishes to make the following comments..

First, in general terms, the three draft resolutions are very similar in substance and form, with only a few differences that do not justify the repetition. My delegation does not see why three draft resolutions were submitted under the heading title of transparency of military expenditures and weapons. In view of the efforts made by this Committee to rationalize its work, we hope that we can look forward to the possibility of having one single draft resolution under one title at the fifty-fourth session.

Secondly, despite our former reservations and the views expressed by some delegations during the past few years, the general trend in draft resolutions under the title "Transparency of military expenditures" or "Transparency in armaments" has been to involve only conventional weapons. My delegation believes that the continuation of that trend leads to incompleteness; the topic should be supplemented by transparency covering all kinds of weapons, including nuclear, bacteriological and chemical weapons of mass destruction. Failure to expand the framework of transparency in armaments serves only the nuclear-weapon States.

Thirdly, the submission by States of information regarding their military expenditures and the categories of weapons they possess should confirm that they are not concealing military expenditures or endeavours to develop and produce weapons that remain secret until a crisis reveals them to the world. The credibility of transparency depends on the confidence of States, and we hope that this will be taken into account in general and complete terms so that efforts to reduce armaments and to build trust do not adversely affect the need and the desire to move ahead affirmatively towards general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Lee (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to make some brief general remarks on cluster 6, and especially on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43. The Government of the Republic of Korea has participated in the Register of Conventional Arms since 1993. We believe that efforts to enhance transparency in armaments provide an initial step for building confidence among the countries concerned.

The Register has been instrumental in enhancing transparency among countries and has greatly contributed to building confidence throughout the world. In this regard, my delegation attaches particular importance to ensuring universality of participation in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Register. My delegation would like to call upon all countries which have not yet done so to report their data on arms transfers to the United Nations Register.

Though my delegation is fully supportive of the draft resolution, we are still of the view that discreet and careful consideration is indispensable in exploring the future direction, and expanding the scope for further development, of the Register. The security interests of each country vary depending on the specific conditions of the country. The working out of a more acceptable and realistic formula that will ensure a wider participation of countries throughout the world is indispensable for achieving the objective of the mechanism.

This year the Republic of Korea joined the other sponsors of the draft resolution. My delegation hopes that the draft resolution will be adopted with the overwhelming support of member countries.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): In our view, greater transparency cannot be a substitute for efforts to reduce tensions and to resolve conflicts as a means of halting arms races in various parts of the world. Transparency by itself cannot lead to a reduction in military expenditures. The basic causes that impel States to acquire defensive arms and to maintain armed forces at certain levels relate to their own national and regional security environments. It is these national and regional security problems that need to be addressed by the international community as a means of halting an arms build-up in various parts of the world.

Moreover, the specific methodologies proposed for guiding reductions in military expenditures are, in our view, also based on fallacious grounds. Specified percentages of budgets are meaningless when States are required to acquire and maintain armed forces at levels that are necessary for the purposes of self-defence, especially against larger neighbours. It is obvious that smaller countries in many parts of the world are obliged to maintain higher percentages of their budgets for such defence expenditures. Any approach that seems to draw a line on the basis of such budgets inherently favours the large and richer countries against the small and poorer countries. Therefore, this approach is not one that should be acceptable to the large majority of the international community, which consists of smaller and poorer States.

We believe that disarmament, especially conventional disarmament, should be promoted on a more equitable basis by addressing the problem in its reality — that is, in terms of the men and machines deployed, the methodologies for their deployment and their state of readiness. It is only through such realistic and hard efforts at negotiations that balanced reductions can be achieved in various parts of the world. Indeed, the experience in Europe at the conclusion of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) confirms that this was the approach that was finally successful. We believe that this is the approach that will have to be followed in other parts of the world as well.

Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My country has always supported resolutions concerning transparency. At this session my delegation will proceed along the same lines and therefore will vote in favour of all draft resolutions under this agenda item, including draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.30, L.39 and L.43.

However, we wish to assert very clearly that that position should not be interpreted as total acceptance of all these draft resolutions. Here we wish to point out certain shortcomings in the draft resolutions and in the concept of transparency in general, and the lack of references to all kinds of armaments, especially weapons of mass destruction.

Despite our position in support of transparency, we would like to add our country's voice to the common voice of Arab countries concerning the Register of Conventional Arms. We hope to have real, meaningful thinking on the Register that takes into account all relevant concepts. We wish to support another delegation's point regarding the need to combine draft resolutions dealing with a single item — namely, transparency — so that in the future the Committee will be able to reduce the degree of redundancy in its draft resolutions.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.30, entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures".

The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that the draft resolution be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I will take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.30, entitled "Objective information on military matters, including transparency of military expenditures", was introduced by the representative of Germany at the 19th meeting, on 30 October 1998. Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2 and Add.1. Bosnia and Herzegovina has also become a sponsor.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Syria.

Mr. Abou-Hadid (Syrian Arab Republic): In the Arabic version of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.30, Germany, which introduced the draft resolution, is not mentioned in the list of sponsors.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I see no objection to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.30 being adopted without a vote. If no delegation wishes to explain its position or vote before a decision is taken, we shall now take action on the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.30 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no delegation wishes to explain its position on the draft resolution just adopted, we will stop our consideration of draft resolutions for today.

Tomorrow members will have a new informal paper listing the draft resolutions to be taken up.

As members will recall, at the beginning of the meeting one delegation requested that action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39 be postponed. Another delegation asked that action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.17/Rev.1 be postponed. Action on those two draft resolutions will therefore be postponed.

(*spoke in English*)

On the other hand, the delegation that had asked for the postponement of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.40, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", is now ready for a vote. Members will therefore find that draft resolution on the list tomorrow unless another delegation asks for a postponement. Is that clear?

I call on the representative of Jordan.

Mr. Aamiry (Jordan): I left this matter to the very end of the day. I wonder if it would be possible, after we take a vote, to leave the voting board on for as long a period as possible, so that it would remain on while the various delegations are explaining their votes after the voting.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): That will present no problem.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

United Nations

A/C.1/53/PV.24

General Assembly
Fifty-third session

First Committee

24th Meeting
Thursday, 5 November 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

Official Records

Chairman: Mr. Mernier .... (Belgium)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 63 to 80 (*continued*)

Action on all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman: Members have this morning received informal paper number 2, containing the list of draft resolutions in clusters 3, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 that we will try to take up today. We will start with cluster 6, as agreed yesterday.

The first draft resolution to be dealt with is draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43, entitled "Transparency in armaments".

If no delegation wishes to make a general statement on the draft resolutions in cluster 6, the Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43.

A separate, recorded vote has been requested on operative paragraph 4 (b) and on operative paragraph 6. Operative paragraph 4 (b) reads as follows:

> "Recalls its request to the Secretary-General, with the assistance of a group of governmental experts to be convened in 2000, on the basis of equitable geographical representation, to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, taking into account the work of the Conference on Disarmament, the views expressed by Member States and his reports on the continuing operation of the Register and its further development, with the view to a decision at its fifty-fifth session".

As no delegation wishes to explain its position before we take a decision on operative paragraph 4 (b), I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43, entitled "Transparency in armaments", was introduced by the representative of the Netherlands at the 19th meeting, on 30 October 1998.

In addition to those countries listed in the draft resolution, it is sponsored by the countries listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2 and Add.1 and Add.2.

The Committee will now proceed to the vote on paragraph 4 (b). I shall now close the voting.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. Egypt is shown on the board as having abstained, but we did not press any button.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): There may be a technical problem. The print-out of the vote may show the correct position.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus,

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Algeria, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia

Paragraph 4 (b) of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43 was retained by 100 votes to none, with 11 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegations of Bolivia, El Salvador, Jamaica, Malawi, the Philippines and the Republic of Moldova informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour; the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic had intended to abstain; the delegation of Egypt had intended not to participate.]

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no delegation wishes to explain its vote, we shall now take a decision on operative paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43, which reads:

(*spoke in English*)

"Invites the Conference on Disarmament to consider continuing its work undertaken in the field of transparency in armaments".

As no delegation wishes to explain its position before action is taken on the paragraph, I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Central African Republic, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Algeria, China, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mexico, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Yemen

Paragraph 6 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43 was retained by 102 votes to none, with 12 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegations of Bolivia, El Salvador, Jamaica, Malawi and the Philippines informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour; the delegation of Syria had intended to abstain.]

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The Committee will now take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43 as a whole.

I call first on the representative of Egypt, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): I wish to explain the vote of my delegation on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43, entitled "Transparency in armaments".

Since the adoption in 1991 of resolution 46/36 L, which established the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, Egypt has faithfully advocated the principle of transparency in military matters. Egypt has been supportive of the objectives underlying the establishment of the Register. Between 1991 and 1993, Egypt lent its support to the annual General Assembly resolutions on transparency in armaments, which were adopted without a vote. However, Egypt changed its vote to an abstention beginning in 1994, when the Group of Governmental Experts on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development was unable to reach agreement on matters relating to the further development of the Register.

For the Register to attain its objectives as a truly significant confidence-building measure capable of eliminating suspicion and misperceptions and thereby contributing to the enhancement of security and stability, it must in our view fulfil the following requirements: first, it must be a universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory confidence-building measure; secondly, it must ensure that all States have equal rights and obligations; thirdly, it must address the legitimate security concerns of all States; and fourthly, it must provide the broadest transparency in all fields of armament in a non-selective manner.

The United Nations Register in its present form may meet the security concerns of certain States. But it does not adequately meet those of Egypt. Only an expanded Register that provides a comprehensive picture and covers in a balanced and non-discriminatory manner the overall military capabilities of States can serve the cause of transparency in armaments. We cannot help but conclude that other countries do not share our enthusiasm, and that they wish to limit the transparency exercise to certain categories of conventional weapons, namely those which currently make up the United Nations Register. That approach is not consistent with agreements reached in the General Assembly in 1991 regarding the early expansion of the scope of the Register. It is also discriminatory, insofar as it requires those States which possess little more than the seven categories listed in the Register to report on virtually everything their armed forces own, while other States, with more advanced military capabilities, are not required to apply transparency to all the armaments and weapons systems in their possession, especially weapons of mass destruction.

Finally, we emphasize that we are not impressed by the prospects for the possible eventual development of the Register in terms of the expansion of its scope. Such prospects seem remote in view of the apparent lack of eagerness on the part of the international community faithfully to embrace the principles and objectives of transparency or to apply them in a comprehensive, non-discriminatory and equitable manner.

For these reasons, my delegation will abstain in the vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We shall now take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43 as a whole. A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Algeria, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mexico, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43, as a whole, was adopted by 112 votes to none, with 12 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegations of Bolivia, El Salvador, Ghana, Jamaica, Malawi and the Philippines informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I now call on those representatives wishing to speak in explanation of vote on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to explain why my delegation abstained in the vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43, entitled "Transparency in armaments".

The Islamic Republic of Iran supports transparency in armaments as a confidence-building measure. We are cognizant of the instrumental role that an enhanced level of transparency could play in building security and confidence among States. We have participated actively in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms since 1992, when it was established, and we will continue to do so. However, we note that contrary to the understanding reached in the adoption of resolution 46/36 L of 1991 and contrary to the content of the resolution — which provided for phased transparency in armaments, including in nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, high-technology weapons systems and conventional armaments — no concrete efforts have been made so far to expand the scope of the Register to include data on all categories of weapons.

We believe that extending transparency to other categories of weapons would facilitate the negotiations on a fissile materials cut-off treaty and would result in more progress in the area of nuclear disarmament. In our view, indifference to these facts was the main reason for the failure in 1997 of the Group of Governmental Experts on the Register to make substantive recommendations to the General Assembly.

Replies that the Secretariat has received from Governments demonstrate that, regrettably, no rigorous efforts have been made to promote full regional participation in the Register on an equitable basis, especially in regions that account for the most conventional arms transfers, such as the Middle East. My delegation is ready to consider any proposal for starting negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on transparency in armaments, provided that such a proposal promotes greater transparency in nuclear weapons, other weapons of mass destruction, high-technology weapons systems and conventional weapons in a non-discriminatory manner.

Mr. Pang Sen (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): My delegation understands that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms was originally intended to contribute to confidence-building through enhanced transparency in conventional armaments and a gradual movement towards rational control of the transfer of conventional arms, so as to promote peace and security. On an experimental basis, China participated in the Register from 1993.

As is well known, the Register is a transparency measure governing lawful arms transfers between sovereign States,as provided for in resolution 46/36 L. Regrettably, however, a certain country has for three consecutive years — since 1996 — in gross defiance of the relevant provisions of that resolution, registered its arms sales to Taiwan, a province of China, on the Register in the form of so-called footnotes. It must be pointed out that selling arms to Taiwan is not only a violation of China's sovereignty but a gross interference in its internal affairs. Moreover, it is obviously not an arms transfer between sovereign States. The practice of registering arms sales to Taiwan on the Register has changed the nature of this Register of transfers between sovereign States and has resulted in its politicization, thus compelling China to suspend its participation in the Register.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43, among other things, calls on Member States to respond to the request of the Secretary-General by providing him data and information for the Register. Under the current circumstances, China obviously cannot provide the data and information as requested. Therefore, China cannot support this draft resolution, and my delegation demands that the parties concerned take immediate action to correct their incorrect practices in order to maintain the seriousness of the United Nations Register.

In addition, this draft resolution once again requests the Secretary-General to establish a group of experts for the further development of the Register. It also requests that the Conference on Disarmament should work in the field of transparency of arms transfers. The Chinese delegation still has different views on these points.

That is why my delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43.

Mr. Than (Myanmar): I am taking the floor to explain the position of my delegation on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43, entitled "Transparency in armaments".

Myanmar believes that transparency in armaments can be a useful confidence-building measure, provided that it is non-discriminatory, universal and voluntary. The draft resolution contains the shortcomings present in the draft resolutions on the subject at previous sessions.

My delegation has reservations on paragraphs 4 (b) and 6. In paragraph 4 (b), the General Assembly would call for the convening of a group of governmental experts in the year 2000 and would call on the Secretary-General to prepare a report on the continuing operation of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and its further development. We believe that we still need to review and reassess the operation of the Register. It is therefore premature and unnecessary at this juncture to further develop the Register. In view of the track record of the group of experts, we also have misgivings about the effectiveness and usefulness of holding another meeting of a group of experts in this regard.

Moreover, we do not see any urgent need for the Conference on Disarmament to take up the issue of transparency in armaments, as called for in paragraph 6, at a time when it ought to be concentrating on banning fissile materials, on nuclear disarmament and on other pressing issues.

Accordingly, my delegation abstained in the voting on paragraphs 4 (b) and 6, as well as on the draft resolution as a whole.

Mr. Mesdoua (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation would also like to explain its vote on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/53/L.43, entitled "Transparency in armaments".

Algeria attaches great importance to transparency, and supports it and endorses it as a confidence-building measure, as it has always supported that and other initiatives aimed at promoting genuine, non-discriminatory transparency covering all types of weapons, including weapons of mass destruction. My delegation therefore regrets that once again this year it has been unable to support the draft resolution, which continues to deal with this matter through a framework which, in our view, has shown its incapacity to meet the expectations of States. Neither can we continue to support the continuation of initiatives which cannot give the necessary support for efforts to truly establish a system which is viable and effective and covers all types of weapons.

Algeria believes that perhaps we should define and extend the scope of transparency; perhaps it should no longer be exclusively based on resolution 46/36 L, which over time — and especially since the last session — has shown its limitations. Transparency should once again be able to include weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. This might also involve developing a position on the status of high-technology weapons and on the questions of transfers, national production and military allocations.

For those reasons, my delegation abstained in the voting on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/53/L.43.

Mr. Benítez Verson (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation's vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/53/L.43 reflects the positive balance which Cuba believes is struck by that document. My country has been participating for several years in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, which was established by resolution 46/36 L. Our experts have been part of the two working groups of governmental experts established to consider the matter and have actively contributed to their work. Nonetheless, my delegation would like to emphasize that we continue to have reservations about operative paragraph 6, and that is why we abstained from the vote on that paragraph.

It is several years now since the Conference on Disarmament concluded its work on transparency. Deciding whether or not to re-examine the question in the Conference requires taking into account the disarmament priorities established by the General Assembly. Clearly, such a decision can be taken only by the Conference on Disarmament itself. That is why my delegation reserves its right to adopt in that forum its final position on this question.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): Having received the voting sheet with regard to paragraph 4 (b) of draft resolution A/C.1/53.L.43, I would like to emphasize again that my delegation did not participate in the voting. This is not reflected in the voting sheet, and we would like it to be reflected in the records of the Committee.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The secretariat has noted the comment of the representative of Egypt, and the appropriate correction will be made.

Does any other delegation wish to take the floor with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43? I see none.

(*spoke in English*)

We will now turn to cluster 7, "Disarmament machinery".

I shall first call on delegations that wish to make a general statement on that cluster.

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): With regard to the report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.1, my delegation welcomes the successful conclusion of the review for the rationalization of the Commission's work at the resumed session of the First Committee in June this year. We also welcome the steady progress made so far in the deliberations on nuclear-weapon-free zones and on practical disarmament measures that the Disarmament Commission took up this year. We believe that it has a unique role to play in disarmament as a specialized deliberative body with a universal membership. In this regard, in our view it should enhance its role by giving priority to creating guidelines or recommendations on the so-called emerging issues, such as practical disarmament measures or transparency in armaments.

In this connection, we hope that the Disarmament Commission will take a mid- to long-term perspective in preparing its agendas, so that Member States will be well prepared in advance for effective and efficient deliberations.

In addition, my delegation sincerely hopes that at its forthcoming session the Disarmament Commission will be able to take a final decision on convening the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. Considering the remarkable progress made towards non-proliferation and disarmament since the end of the cold war, as well as the fundamental shift in the political landscape that has occurred, we believe it is time to review the most critical aspects of the process of disarmament and to set a future course of action in the field of disarmament and arms control.

Regarding draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.12, on the report of the Conference on Disarmament, my delegation, like all other delegations, appreciates the role of the Conference on Disarmament and its contribution to the cause of disarmament as the international community's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.

We particularly welcome the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to establish an Ad Hoc Committee entrusted with negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty; this is a remarkable achievement. While we look forward to substantive progress in this process of negotiations during its 1999 session, we deem it essential to ensure, from the initial stage, the full participation of all countries with nuclear capabilities.

Finally, with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.5, my Government attaches great importance to the role of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. The Centre has been making a noteworthy contribution to the cause of peace and disarmament by being actively engaged in a number of programmes known as the "Kathmandu process" for disarmament and regional stability. In this vein, my delegation appreciates and supports its plan to organize a United Nations disarmament conference in Nagasaki, later this month, focused on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. We trust that these activities will be further promoted.

In recognition of the Regional Centre's important role, my Government plans to make a financial contribution towards the cost of its activities this year, as we have done in previous years.

The Chairman: As no other delegation wishes to make a general statement on cluster 7, "Disarmament machinery", the Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.1, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission".

The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that the Committee adopt it without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

There being no objection, I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.1, entitled "Report of the Disarmament Commission", was introduced by the representative of Belarus at the 18th meeting, on 29

October 1998. The sponsors are listed in the draft resolution and in document A/C.1/53/INF/2.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Does any delegation wish to explain its position before a decision is taken on the draft resolution? As I see none, may I take it that the draft resolution is adopted?

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.1 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on delegations wishing to explain their position on the draft resolution just adopted.

(*spoke in English*)

There being none, the Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.8, entitled

(*spoke in French*)

"United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa".

The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that the Committee adopt it without a vote. As I hear no objection, I take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.8, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa", was introduced by the representative of Nigeria at the 16th meeting on 27 October 1998. The sponsors are listed in the draft resolution and in document A/C.1/53/INF/2.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no delegation wishes to explain its position before a decision is taken, may I take it that the draft resolution is adopted?

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.8 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Does any delegation wish to explain its position after the decision that has just been taken? I see none.

(*spoke in English*)

The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.18, entitled "United Nations Disarmament Information Programme". The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that it be adopted without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.18, entitled "United Nations Disarmament Information Programme", was introduced by the representative of Mexico at the 19th meeting, on 30 October 1998. Additional sponsors to those listed in the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no delegation wishes to explain its position before a decision is taken, may I take it that the draft resolution is adopted?

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.18 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Does any delegation wish to explain its position after the decision? I see none.

(*spoke in English*)

The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.25, entitled "United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament".

The sponsors have expressed the wish that the Committee adopt the draft resolution without a vote. Is there any objection to that procedure? There being none, I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.25, entitled "United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament", was introduced by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement at the 21st meeting, on 2 November 1998.

As corrected in document A/C.1/INF/3, the date in the first line of the first preambular paragraph should read "22 December 1997".

The sponsors are listed in the draft resolution and in document A/C.1/53/INF/2.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no delegation wishes to explain its position before a decision is taken, may I take it that the draft resolution is adopted?

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.25 was adopted.

The Chairman: As no delegation wishes to explain its position on the draft resolution just adopted, the Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.29, entitled "United Nations disarmament fellowship training and advisory services".

The sponsors have expressed the wish that the draft resolution be adopted without a vote. Is there any objection to that procedure?

There being no objection, I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.29, entitled "United Nations disarmament fellowship training and advisory services", was introduced by the representative of Nigeria at the 16th meeting on 27 October 1998. In addition to the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Does any delegation wish to explain its position before we take a decision? I see none, so may I take it that the draft resolution is adopted?

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.29 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no delegation wishes to explain its position on the draft resolution just adopted, the Committee will now proceed to cluster 8.

(*spoke in English*)

Is there any delegation wishing to make general statements on that cluster? As I see none, the Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.15. Does any delegation wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting? I see none.

A recorded vote has been requested.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.15 is entitled "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament". The draft resolution was introduced by the representative of India at the 17th meeting, on 28 October 1998. Sponsors additional to those listed in the draft resolution are listed in document A/53/C.1/INF/2.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen

Against:

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Brazil, Georgia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Marshall Islands, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Ukraine, Uruguay

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.15 was adopted by 77 votes to 43, with 16 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Jordan informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Argentina, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote on the draft resolution just adopted.

Ms. Martinic (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation wishes to voice certain considerations with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.15, entitled "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament".

Argentina currently enjoys cooperation in the field of technological materials and also supplies various countries represented here. We are convinced that the exchange of technology is benefited and even increased when it takes place within a clear and reliable framework of responsible use of technology. In turn, the lack of access to technology arises out of policies that generate uncertainty and instability. Countries that are more developed associate themselves with those that contribute to the non-proliferation regime and offer guarantees for the peaceful use of such technologies.

That has been and remains the policy of Argentina. Our nuclear cooperation policies recognize contributions from countries with a higher level of technological development. In turn, Argentina's programmes with friendly countries are based on the same spirit of transparency and confidence and on the guarantees provided by safeguard systems. We hope that our experience of regional integration and cooperation will stimulate a broad process at the international level, with up-to-date technologies that will do away with underdevelopment and contribute to securing peace and stability.

We know from our own experience that both of these objectives are perfectly easy to reconcile. That is why my country abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.15, which does not recognize the contribution of control regimes to cooperation in this field.

The Chairman: We shall now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.17/Rev.1, entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security".

The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that the Committee adopt it without a vote. Is there any objection? As I see none, I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.17/Rev.1, entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security", was introduced by the representative of the Russian Federation at the Committee's 17th meeting, on 28 October 1998.

The sponsors are listed in the draft resolution and in document A/C.1/53/INF/2/Add.2.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): As no delegation wishes to explain its position before we take a decision, may I take it that the draft resolution is adopted?

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.17/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I now call on those delegations wishing to explain their positions following the adoption of the draft resolution.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): The United States joined in adoption by consensus of the draft resolution entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security". We commend the flexibility shown by the main sponsor in pursuing this initiative. We believe the text just developed outlines a balanced approach that will enable the international community to begin thoughtful and reflective consideration of this new and complicated topic.

The General Assembly's adoption of the resolution in plenary will launch the international community on a complex enterprise encompassing many interrelated factors which representatives in the First Committee do not ordinarily address. For example, the topic includes technical aspects that relate to global communications, as well as non-technical issues associated with economic cooperation and trade, intellectual property rights, law enforcement, anti-terrorist cooperation and other issues that are considered in the Second or Sixth Committee.

Furthermore, the actions and programmes of Governments are by no means the only appropriate focus, for the initiative also involves important concerns of individuals, associations, enterprises and other organizations that are active in the private sector.

The United States believes it will be important for the international community's future consideration of this topic to draw on the experience of representatives in the Sixth and Second Committees. We believe it will be at least equally important to seek ideas and insights from a broad range of experts in our respective Governments and societies.

Mr. Campbell (Australia): Although Australia acquiesced in the consensus on this draft resolution, we have some reservations about the text. Our general concern is based on the use of ambiguous language at various points in it. This language leaves the precise intent and implications of the draft resolution unclear. We therefore look forward to further clarification of its concept.

Mr. Khairat (Egypt): Egypt, too, joined the consensus on the draft resolution, despite the broad plethora of issues it deals with. I second what the Ambassador of Australia has just said about ambiguous language. The sporadic ideas that include information terrorism, dissemination of information and pirating, as well as the inability to fully understand the relationship between all these telecommunications measures insofar as they relate to national security, leave questions unanswered.

How can we define telecommunications in the context of international security, as well as the generic nature of information? In paragraph 2 the draft resolution provides for certain associated measures, and we hope that in the reporting called for there many unanswered questions will be addressed and clarified.

The Chairman: As no other delegation wishes to speak in explanation of position, we shall now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.26, entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control".

A recorded vote has been requested.

If no delegation wishes to explain its vote before the vote, I shall call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.26, entitled "Observance of environmental norms in the drafting and implementation of agreements on disarmament and arms control", was introduced by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement, at the 21st meeting of the Committee, on 2 November 1998. The sponsors are listed in the draft resolution and in document A/C.1/53/INF/2.

The Committee will now proceed to vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.26.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Abstaining:

France, Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.26 was adopted by 138 votes to none, with 4 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives wishing to explain their vote.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): As we have stated for the past several years on similar draft resolutions, the United States is confused about the purpose and objectives of this draft resolution, and we frankly question its relevance to the work of the First Committee.

Simply put, the United States sees no direct connection between general environmental standards and multilateral arms control agreements. Agreements of this kind are uniquely intricate and difficult enough to negotiate, without having to consider how to focus on or draw up vague environmental norms.

Of course, no one could oppose the idea of preserving the environment. Those Member States negotiating any bilateral, regional or multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements should take relevant environmental concerns into account in carrying out such agreements. The United States Government operates under stringent domestic environmental legislation, which requires the preparation of environmental impact statements for many activities, including the implementation of arms control and disarmament agreements.

While this year's version of this draft resolution does not include the overtly objectionable language used in previous years, we continue to question its relevance, purpose and utility, and we therefore abstained.

The Chairman: I see no other delegation wishing to take the floor, so the Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.27, entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development".

The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that the Committee adopt it without a vote. There being no objection, we shall act accordingly.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.27, entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development" was introduced by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the States members of the Non-Aligned Movement at the 21st meeting, on 2 November 1998. In addition to the countries listed in the draft resolution, it is sponsored by the countries listed in A/C.1/53/INF/2.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): As no delegation wishes to speak in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution, may I take it that the Committee wishes to adopt it?

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.27 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on those delegations wishing to explain their positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): I request that the record of today's proceedings reflect that the United States did not participate in the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.27, which asserts a relationship between disarmament and development. We believe that disarmament and development are two distinct issues that simply do not lend themselves to being linked. It was for that reason that the United States did not participate in the 1987 Conference on the matter. Accordingly, the United States does not and will not consider itself bound by the declarations in the "Final Document" of the International Conference.

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Iceland, align themselves with this statement.

The members of the European Union again joined the consensus on the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/53/L.27, entitled "Relationship between disarmament and development", and wish to clarify their understanding of it.

While they recognize the considerable benefit that may accrue from disarmament, there is no simple, automatic link between the European Union's commitments to economic and social development and to development cooperation and savings made in other areas, including disarmament.

At the same time, we would like to underline the European Union's commitment to development cooperation and to note that assistance provided by the European Union and its Member States to developing countries accounts for two thirds of the global total.

Mr. Becher (Israel): My delegation joined the consensus, but would like to dissociate itself from the fourth preambular paragraph, which makes reference to the Final Document of the meeting of the heads of State or Government of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, which took place in Durban, South Africa, from 29 August to 3 September 1998. That Final Document contains references to my country and to the Middle East situation which we simply cannot accept.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

(*spoke in English*)

As no delegation wishes to make a general statement on cluster 9, on related matters of disarmament and international security, the Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.31/Rev.1, entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures".

The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that the Committee adopt it without a vote. There being no objection, we shall act accordingly.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.31/Rev.1, entitled "Consolidation of peace through practical disarmament measures", was introduced by the representative of Germany at the 20th meeting, on 30 October 1998. In addition to the countries listed in the draft resolution, it is sponsored by the countries listed in A/C.1/53/INF/2 and Add.1.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): As no delegation wishes to speak in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft resolution, may I take it that the Committee wishes to adopt the draft resolution?

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.31/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): As there are no requests by delegations to explain their position after the decision on the draft resolution, we turn to

(*spoke in English*)

cluster 10, on international security.

Does any delegation wish to make a general statement on that cluster?

Mr. Calovski (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): I would like to make a general statement on behalf of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1 and of my delegation. The draft resolution would be the second General Assembly draft resolution to address one of the most urgent issues of current international relations. In the words of its eleventh preambular paragraph, there is a

> "need for United Nations measures to help prevent the violent disintegration of States, thereby enhancing the maintenance of international peace and security and economic and social advancement of all peoples".

The draft resolution addresses the issue in a positive way by underlining the emergence of new opportunities for building a peaceful world. Its starting point is observance of the provisions of the United Nations Charter and of international law. The globalization of international relations, whether political or economic, social or cultural, cannot avoid globalization of the effort to prevent new conflicts and solve ongoing ones or of the efforts to strengthen international peace and security and to promote international cooperation.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1 stresses the importance of regional efforts, and the importance of the activities of international organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Organization of American States, the Association of South-East Asian Nations, the Council of Europe, the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The draft resolution stresses in particular the importance of good-neighbourliness and the development of friendly relations among States to the solution of problems among States and calls upon all States to solve their disputes with other States by peaceful means. It affirms the need for strict compliance with the principle of the inviolability of international borders and with the principle of the territorial integrity of any State.

In our view, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1 does not contain controversial elements. It should be seen as an important effort of the General Assembly in the maintenance of international peace and security. Consequently, the sponsors would like it to be adopted without a vote.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Does any other delegation wish to make a general statement on this cluster? I see none.

(*spoke in English*)

The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.32/Rev.2, "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region".

The sponsors have expressed the wish that it be adopted without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

I call upon the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.32/Rev.2, "Strengthening of security and cooperation in the Mediterranean region", was introduced by the representative of Algeria at the 20th meeting, on 30 October 1998. The sponsors are listed in the draft resolution and in document A/C.1/53/INF/2/Add.2.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): As no delegation wishes to explain its position before a decision is taken, may I take it that the draft resolution is adopted?

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.32/Rev.2 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call upon those representatives who wish to explain their position after the decision just taken.

Mr. Becher (Israel): Israel is satisfied that an important draft resolution, important particularly to the Mediterranean States, has been adopted without a vote. The draft resolution has already been with us for some years. It sets down some major principles with a view to strengthening cooperative dialogue among the States in the region. The draft resolution can remain a matter of full consensus as long as it is not harnessed for short-sighted objectives. However, it must continue to reflect the spirit in which it was conceived and adopted.

It is the position of my delegation that all security matters pertaining to the Middle East are beholden to the peace process in the region as a whole. Paragraph 5 of the draft resolution does not take this principle into account. It is Israel's view that primacy should be given to security arrangements, which can be complemented, where appropriate, by endorsing global agreement.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation joined the adoption by consensus of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.32/Rev.2. However, I would like to place on record our reservations about the eighth preambular paragraph concerning the situation in the Middle East.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): As there are no other delegations wishing to explain their position on the draft resolution just adopted, the Committee will now consider draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1, "Maintenance of international security — prevention of the violent disintegration of States". The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that it be adopted without a vote. Is there any objection to that procedure?

Mr. Li Changhe (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like there to be a recorded vote on the draft resolution.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee) Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1, "Maintenance of international security — prevention of the violent disintegration of States", was introduced by the representative of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia at the 18th meeting of the Committee on 29 October 1998. The sponsors are listed in the draft resolution.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Before a decision is taken on the draft resolution, does any delegation wish to explain its position on it?

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): We appreciate the efforts of the delegation of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia in promoting the objectives of this draft resolution, which concerns the prevention of the violent disintegration of States.

We fully share in this objective. We shall, however, be constrained to abstain if there is a vote on the draft resolution, for two reasons.

First, the draft resolution does not contain the fundamental affirmation of the right of peoples to self-determination, peoples under colonial and foreign occupation. We witness in some cases that foreign occupation is justified by the principle of territorial integrity, and therefore we felt that it was important that this draft resolution should reflect that principle.

Secondly, the new draft includes certain concepts in its preambular part which we believe are not relevant to its purposes and objectives.

Mr. De Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): If this draft resolution is put to the vote my delegation will, as in previous years, abstain. The reasons are few, but sufficient.

First, we are not convinced that the topic of the draft resolution is really something to be examined by the First Committee, whose mandate is essentially disarmament. I would point out that in the 1996 Disarmament Yearbook, which we use when looking for precedents in the Committee, there is no mention of resolution 51/55, adopted at the fifty-first session of the General Assembly, on this particular topic.

Secondly, just as in the case of the resolution adopted at the fifty-first session, a juridical imbalance exists in the operative paragraphs of this draft resolution. The principle of territorial integrity prevails, while two principles are omitted that are equally important and relevant to these issues: self-determination of peoples and non-interference in the domestic affairs of States.

Thirdly, the draft resolution appeals to a number of regional bodies to undertake preventive action, which, in the case of some of those bodies, might not be part of their mandates.

Mr. Aamiry (Jordan): If I can do so at this stage, Mr. Chairman, I should like to request a separate, recorded vote on operative paragraphs 3 and 4 of this draft resolution.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Delegations have heard the request by the delegation of Jordan.

Operative paragraph 3 reads:

(*spoke in English*)

> "Calls upon all States to solve their disputes with other States by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter"

Does any representative wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting?

Mr. De Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Mexico will vote in favour of the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes, and would not understand if a Member of the United Nations were to abstain or vote against this principle.

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee is voting first on operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of

Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:
None

Abstaining:
None

Operative paragraph 3 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1 was retained by 144 votes to none, with no abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We shall vote next on operative paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1, which reads:

(*spoke in English*)

> "Affirms the need for strict compliance with the principle of inviolability of international borders".

Does any delegation wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting?

Mr. De Icaza (Mexico) (*interpretation from Spanish*): An isolated vote on a principle of international law can only be a positive vote. It would be impossible to vote against it.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee is now voting on operative paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:
Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:
None

Abstaining:
None

Operative paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1 was retained by 143 votes to none, with no abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We will now take action on the draft resolution as a whole.

I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee is now voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1 as a whole.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Armenia, Chile, China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Pakistan

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1, as a whole, was adopted by 136 votes to none, with 7 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on the draft resolution just adopted.

Ms. Simone (Armenia): Armenia abstained in the voting on the draft resolution on "Maintenance of international security — prevention of the violent disintegration of States", contained in document A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1, because we do not believe the text sufficiently reflects the problem.

We agree with the comment of the representative of Liechtenstein on Monday, that while the draft resolution focuses on an important issue, it does not properly address that issue and thus constitutes a lost opportunity.

While stating that the principles and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and international law are essential for dealing with the issues under consideration, the draft resolution fails to affirm all these principles. Armenia does not share the view of the sponsors that some have supremacy over others. We think that a draft resolution on the prevention of the violent disintegration of States, while naturally focusing on the principle of territorial integrity of States, should at the same time incorporate the principle of self-determination. We do not accept that there is a contradiction between the principles of self-determination and the principle of the territorial integrity of States. The Final Act of the Helsinki Document states that the principles should be applied jointly, and we believe that they are mutually reinforcing rather than contradictory.

Mr. Li Changhe (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): My delegation concurs with the main thrust and most of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1. Therefore, we have no difficulty in accepting it as a whole. However, a preambular paragraph contains some elements which do not fall within the purview of this Committee. We proposed amendments to the relevant sponsors, but they were not incorporated into the draft resolution. That is why my delegation abstained in the vote on the draft resolution.

Mrs. Fritsche (Liechtenstein): I would like to explain why my delegation had to abstain when draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1 was adopted.

The main thrust of our thinking on the draft resolution was put before the Committee during its thematic discussion on 2 November. The draft resolution just adopted deals with a highly topical issue and could have made an important contribution to the work of the General Assembly. We think it fails to do so for the following reasons.

First, the draft resolution puts a very strong emphasis on the principle of territorial integrity. Like every Member of the United Nations, we are deeply committed to this principle enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. At the same time, we find it necessary to consider this principle in a certain framework because upholding it cannot be a goal in itself; rather, it is a goal to be achieved through giving due consideration to other principles of international law.

Secondly, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1 does not, in our opinion, live up to the expectations created by its very title, "Maintenance of international security: prevention of the violent disintegration of States". The work of the Organization in the field of prevention is gaining increasing importance and should by all accounts be further developed and enhanced, both conceptually and operationally. Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1 does not properly address the concrete efforts which are necessary to deal with the issue of the violent disintegration of States. We are grateful to see that it acknowledges the fact that the vast majority of violent conflicts at present are conflicts within States. We find it hard to understand that the text, which claims to adopt a preventive approach, does not also address the root causes of such conflicts, which can be manifold and complex, but very often lie in tensions between communities and central Governments or among such communities living within States. Analysing and trying to remedy the causes of a phenomenon seems to us inevitably a key element of any preventive effort.

As stated before, we are grateful to the main sponsor of the text and acknowledge the good intentions behind it. We would have liked to see an open discussion of this draft resolution as well as of our proposals made to it. This, unfortunately, did not happen, even though the co-sponsors were able to incorporate some of our ideas into the text. We would have been happy to support and indeed sign on to a text that properly addresses the issues before us and we regret once again this lost opportunity. We hope that we will be seized with the matter again, maybe in a different forum where a more thorough debate is possible.

Mr. González (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): With respect to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.44/Rev.1, which we have just adopted, my delegation abstained essentially because it agrees with the views expressed by the representatives of Mexico and Pakistan. We do not see enough recognition in the draft resolution of the legal balance that must exist between principles of international law and the Charter, particularly in the operative paragraphs. Furthermore, the door is left open to misinterpretation, or tacit authorization of the right of interference, which has not yet been established, and which is not the same as humanitarian assistance law. With this in mind, and in order to remain consistent from the legal point of view, my delegation abstained in the vote on this draft resolution.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): As no other delegation wishes to speak on the draft resolution, we will now take up cluster 3,

(*spoke in English*)

"Outer space (disarmament aspects)". Does any delegation wish to make a general statement on that cluster? I see none.

The Committee will now consider draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.40, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". A recorded vote has been requested.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.40, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", was introduced by the representative of Egypt at the 17th meeting, on 28 October 1998. In addition to the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Does any delegation wish to explain its vote before a decision is taken? I see none.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Argentina, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), United States of America

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.40 was adopted by 140 votes to none, with 5 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on the draft resolution just adopted.

Ms. Crittenberger (United States of America): As in previous years, the United States abstained on the draft resolution entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", which this year appeared in document A/C.1/53/L.40. For almost a decade there has been unprecedented cooperation in outer space, and certainly no arms race. The 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies forbids the emplacement of weapons of mass destruction in outer space, a key prohibition that we consider both necessary and sufficient. We see no prospect of an arms race, and do not believe it would be useful or worthwhile for the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish an ad hoc committee to negotiate or deliberate on outer space topics. Instead, the Conference on Disarmament should concentrate on negotiating a treaty that would prohibit the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other explosive devices, as it finally agreed to do in August of this year.

In addition, the United States and many other countries believe that the Conference on Disarmament should negotiate a treaty that would ban the transfer or export of anti-personnel landmines. Those two efforts would undoubtedly absorb a major share of the time and energy available to delegations in Geneva.

The United States already carries out significant confidence-building and transparency measures in relation to activities in outer space. Others, however, may wish to propose additional measures, and we remain willing to discuss specific proposals on their merits.

Mr. Seibert (Germany): My delegation wishes to speak in explanation of vote on behalf of Germany and of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland regarding the decision just taken on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.40, entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space". Although our delegations supported the draft resolution, we want to make sure that our votes are not misconstrued when the subject of outer space is addressed at the 1999 session of the Conference on Disarmament. In the past, both the United Kingdom and Germany have actively contributed to the work of the ad hoc committee on outer space and have also formulated a number of proposals. Unfortunately, it was not possible to achieve consensus on any of the proposals that were discussed at the time. Germany and the United Kingdom recognize the continued validity of the subject. We are therefore ready to support the reappointment of the Special Coordinator on this item in the Conference on Disarmament and the re-examination and possible updating of the relevant mandate with an open mind and in a constructive manner. The decision on whether to re-establish an ad hoc committee on outer space should, however, depend on whether it will be possible to identify substantive issues on which useful work can be done in the framework of an ad hoc committee.

Our delegations hold the view that the Conference on Disarmament has other important work to do in 1999, which in our view should be given high priority. First and foremost, our delegations are committed to an early start of negotiations on a fissile materials cut-off treaty at the outset of next year's session. For this reason, our positive vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.40 should not be understood as automatic approval of the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee. It was intended rather to demonstrate our flexibility on the matter. We will enter the discussions on the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament for 1999 in a constructive spirit, and we are ready to re-examine the question of the most appropriate way to deal with the issue of outer space in the light of the points I have just mentioned.

Programme of work

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The Committee has taken action on all the draft resolutions scheduled for this morning. Only four further draft resolutions are at present ready for consideration: A/C.1/53/L.2, A/C.1/53/L.7/Rev.1, A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1 and A/C.1/53/L.36. Action on these will be taken tomorrow morning; there will be no meeting this afternoon. I urge delegations which had requested the postponement of action on draft resolutions but which are now ready to put those texts to the vote to inform the secretariat so that a complete list can be prepared.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.

United Nations

A/C.1/53/PV.25

General Assembly

Fifty-third session

Official Records

First Committee

25th Meeting
Friday, 6 November 1998, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Mernier . . . . (Belgium)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 63 to 80 *(continued)*

Action on all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman *(interpretation from French)*: The secretariat has today circulated a third informal paper containing the list of draft resolutions on which action will be taken today.

Five draft resolutions are ready to be acted upon. Given that the most controversial draft resolutions have not yet been voted upon, I appeal to all delegations to give positive consideration to the postponements requested. We hope that draft resolutions that do not pose major difficulties can be acted upon as soon as possible — perhaps even on Monday afternoon. That would ensure sufficient time for action on the difficult draft resolutions to take place towards the end of the week. I remind the Committee that next week is our last week of work, and only five meetings are scheduled.

Once again, I appeal to all delegations to ensure that requests for postponements are well founded. Please bring to my attention as early as possible those draft resolutions for which postponements had been requested but on which members are now ready to take action.

We first turn to cluster 1, nuclear weapons.

(spoke in English)

As no delegations wish to make general statements on that cluster, we will now consider draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.2, "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia".

The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that the Committee adopt it without a vote. As there is no objection to that procedure, I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.2, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia", was introduced by the representative of Kyrgyzstan at the 18th meeting on 29 October 1998. In addition to the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2 and Add.1.

In connection with this draft resolution, I should like to make the following statement on behalf of the Secretary-General:

> "By operative paragraph 4 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.2 the General Assembly would request 'the Secretary-General, within existing resources, to provide assistance to the Central Asian States in the preparation of the form and elements of an agreement on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia', and by operative paragraph 5 it would decide 'to consider the question of the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia at its fifty-fourth session under the agenda item entitled "General and complete disarmament"'.

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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"It is envisaged that, in response to the resolution, two expert group meetings will be held, one in April 1999 in New York and the other in July 1999 in Geneva. The conference-servicing requirements would be for two meetings per day, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, for five days, for each. On the basis of similar meetings held in 1998, it is expected that interpretation would be required in English and Russian only. It is also anticipated that 20 pages of in-session and 10 pages of post-session documentation would be required in English and Russian, for each meeting.

"The conference-servicing requirements of the meetings are estimated at $28,200 for the meeting at New York and $23,600 for the meeting at Geneva, at full cost. Provision is made under Section 1B, General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, of the programme budget for the biennium 1998-99 not only for meetings programmed at the time of the budget preparation but also for meetings authorized subsequently, provided that the number and distribution of meetings are consistent with the pattern of meetings of past years. The extent to which the Organization's capacity would need to be supplemented by temporary assistance resources can be determined only in the light of the calendar of conferences and meetings for the biennium 1998-99. Consequently, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, no additional appropriation would be required, at this time."

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): As no delegation wishes to explain its position before a decision is taken on the draft resolution, may I take it that the draft resolution is adopted?

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.2 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Does any delegation wish to explain its position after the adoption of the draft resolution?

Mrs. Kunadi (India): It is noteworthy that the proposal for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia is supported by all the States of the region and thus is in conformity with the requirement of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned.

We are particularly pleased that the efforts of the Central Asian States, with which India enjoys historically close and friendly ties, is receiving the international support that this initiative deserves.

We, on our part, fully respect the choice made by the Central Asian States and are prepared to extend all possible support and commitments in response to an expressed need for the early realization of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): As no other delegations wish to explain their position on the draft resolution just adopted, the Committee will now take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.36,

(*spoke in English*)

"Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons".

A recorded vote has been requested.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.36, "Conclusion of effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use of threat of use of nuclear weapons", was introduced by the representative of Pakistan at the 17th meeting on 28 October 1998. In addition to the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Georgia, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia

Against:
None

Abstaining:
Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.36 was adopted by 78 votes to none, with 48 abstentions.

[Subsequently the delegation of Ghana informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I now call on those delegations wishing to explain their vote.

Mr. Campbell (Australia): Australia considers that, pending the elimination of nuclear weapons consistent with article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), negative security assurances are an essential reinforcing element underpinning the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Australia considers that those countries that are non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT which have renounced the nuclear weapons option and which are in full compliance with their NPT obligations have a legitimate claim to credible, comprehensive and effective negative security assurances from the five nuclear-weapon States.

Negative security assurances are also an important inducement for the few States still outside the NPT to accede to it. The failure of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.36 to give due primacy to the particular claims and interests of States parties to the NPT in this regard, regrettably, prevents Australia from supporting the text. In addition, Australia regards as extremely dubious the standing with respect to negative security assurances of any State party to the NPT which may be seeking to acquire nuclear weapons.

Mrs. Kunadi (India): I wish to explain our vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.36.

India has consistently maintained that the only credible guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons lies in their total elimination. Until that objective is achieved, as an interim measure, there exists an obligation on the part of the States possessing nuclear weapons to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. That obligation should be of an internationally legally binding character: clear, credible, universal and without discrimination. We welcomed the resumption of work in 1998 through an Ad Hoc Committee in the Conference on Disarmament. Based on that approach, we voted in favour of the draft resolution.

For its part, and conscious of its responsibilities as a nuclear-weapon State, India has stated that it will not be the first to use nuclear weapons and that it remains willing to strengthen that undertaking by entering into bilateral agreements on no first use or into multilateral negotiations on global no first use. It having been stated that we shall not be the first to use nuclear weapons, there remains no basis for their use against countries that do not have nuclear weapons. In this manner India is providing a unilateral negative security assurance to all non-nuclear-weapon States. India respects the choice exercised by non-nuclear-weapon States in establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at amongst the States of the region concerned, and stands prepared to convert this commitment into a legal obligation.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): South Africa is a strong supporter of granting legally binding negative security assurances to the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as is demonstrated by our actions and by the proposals which South Africa has submitted in the context of the review and extension process of the NPT. We believe that negative security assurances are an integral element of the NPT bargain by which the non-nuclear-weapon States have undertaken a legal commitment not to aspire to these weapons.

The Conference on Disarmament, in Geneva, has continuously demonstrated its inability to deal with this issue effectively, and it is South Africa's belief that the best place for taking up the matter of negative security assurances is within the context of the NPT.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.36 did not take into account these views, and for that reason South Africa abstained in the vote on that text.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We shall turn now to the draft resolutions in cluster 4, on conventional weapons. I call first on representatives wishing to make general statements on these draft resolutions.

Ms. Cheng (Singapore): Singapore is committed to the efforts of the international community to combat the problem of illicit trafficking in and the illicit circulation of small arms. Such illicit transfers pose a real danger to regional and international security. That is why we support draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.7/Rev.1, submitted by Mali, A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1, submitted by Japan, and A/C.1/53/L.41/Rev.1, submitted by South Africa, on this issue. These draft resolutions are rightly focused on curbing illicit transfers of such weapons.

For its part, Singapore has strict controls over the import and export of small arms and light weapons. Also, our laws on the unlawful possession of small arms and on the illegal use of such weapons are strictly enforced.

While illicit transfers of small arms should be curbed, illicit trafficking must be clearly distinguished from the production, accumulation and transfer of small arms for the legitimate right of national defence. No measure aimed at curbing the illicit transfer of small arms should impair the right of States to self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter, which would be meaningless if States did not have the right to acquire arms with which to defend themselves.

We also support increased consultation, coordination and cooperation amongst Member States to combat illicit trafficking in small arms, and stress the central role of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in this matter. However, not all States, particularly small States, have the manpower or resources to participate in these consultations as fully as they would like. Inability to participate does not indicate a lack of interest. It is therefore crucial that the consultation process should be a transparent and inclusive one, involving all Member States. The issue at hand is complex and difficult; it cannot be solved simply by a handful of countries.

Mr. Amehou (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): In many regions, illicit trafficking in small arms has become a major concern. The uncontrolled proliferation of light weapons now poses a grave threat to the security of many countries, especially African countries. That proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a cause of the loss of life and the material damage that now plague many countries of West Africa. In some countries of that subregion, wars have sharply increased the illicit circulation of these weapons, which are used in the commission of murderous robberies and other terrible crimes once unknown in the subregion.

The existence of these weapons has exacerbated conflicts that in other circumstances would have been settled peacefully. In some parts of the West African subregion, the civilian population — wishing only to go about its daily business — is held hostage by armed bands possessing effective means of communication which are sometimes more sophisticated than those available to official security forces. Hence, there is grave danger inherent in the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons in the West African subregion.

Therefore, aware of the risk of general destabilization of the subregion, the heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) have placed a moratorium on the import, export and production of light weapons, small arms and certain other conventional weapons. These praiseworthy efforts deserve the support of the international community so that they may have tangible and satisfactory results. Indeed, sustained assistance from the international community in the demobilization of former combatants, and above all their reintegration into society, is needed, and this assistance should include, in the subregion, collecting and even repurchasing arms from former combatants with a view to their effective destruction. Training and equipping national security forces should also be part of this assistance.

All these efforts of the international community will be in vain without reform of military-industrial complexes, vestiges of the cold war that continue to flood the countries of the third world, particularly in Africa, with small arms. The international community will have to define a reliable mechanism to ensure effective control, from the producer to the end-user of these weapons.

In this connection, my delegation supports all draft resolutions aimed at reducing and eliminating these weapons in our countries.

Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My statement on behalf of my country, the Sultanate of Oman, is in the framework of the general statements on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1, concerning small arms, under cluster 4 on conventional weapons.

My delegation has in the past abstained from voting on this draft resolution put forward by Japan. The reasons for that are as follows. First, while the draft resolution touches on issues important to the international community as well as to developing and developed countries, it lacks unity and focus, as it touches upon several issues such as small arms, ammunition, explosives and the domestic jurisdiction of States. My country believes that the primary responsibility for dealing with issues such as illegal trafficking in small arms lies primarily with the national authorities of every State, whether an importer or exporter.

The second reason which leads us to believe that the draft resolution lacks objectivity is the fact that it promotes the idea of holding an international conference on the subject. Despite the fact that my delegation supports this noble and lofty idea, which expresses a laudable concept, we believe that it should take into account the ideas and positions of all States and not just the recommendations and ideas that have been put forward by a limited group of selected experts.

Because of our belief in the noble purpose of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1, my delegation will vote in favour of it. However, we believe that the States that prepared it should move in a general direction that aims at taking into account all the ideas of all States and ascertaining their positions.

The international conference should be well prepared, but no specific dates should be set for it to complete its work, which we believe should be done within the framework of the stages of a recognized process. Therefore, as I have stated, my delegation will support all the draft resolutions to be introduced on small arms.

Mr. Rowe (Sierra Leone): The importance which the Sierra Leone delegation attaches to the problem of small arms and the urgent need to curb the illicit traffic in those weapons was clearly demonstrated two months ago when the President of Sierra Leone himself signed the Ottawa Convention here in New York. We expect to continue our commitment to the cause and the issue of small arms, and we will take up the ratification process in our Parliament as soon as possible, hopefully before the Convention goes into effect early next year.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of Mali to introduce a revised draft resolution.

Mr. Sylla (Mali) (*interpretation from French*): I would like to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.7/Rev.1, which will soon be in its second revision, as document A/C.1/53.L.7/Rev.2, when the typographical errors have been corrected, and with the replacement in the thirteenth preambular paragraph of

(*spoke in English*)

"the Oslo Platform and the Brussels Appeal" by "the Oslo common understanding and the Brussels call for action".

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I hope that all delegations have taken note of those minor changes. In order to give them time to consider them, we shall deal with draft resolution A/C.1/L.7/Rev.2 at the end of the morning, and we shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1, entitled

(*spoke in English*)

"Small arms".

A separate, recorded vote has been requested on the fourth preambular paragraph, which reads:

> "*Reaffirming also* the right of self-determination of all peoples, in particular peoples under colonial or other forms of alien domination or foreign occupation, and the importance of the effective realization of this right, as enunciated, *inter alia*, in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the World Conference on Human Rights on 25 June 1993, A/CONF.157/24 (Part I), Chap. III".

I call first on those delegations wishing to explain their position before we take action on that paragraph.

Mrs. Burgois (France) (*interpretation from French*): Today we are to take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1. I would like to take this opportunity to give France's position regarding this text and light weapons and small arms in general.

As others before me have said, this question transcends the field of disarmament. It also concerns the reinforcement of peace and security, in which, along with development, the fight against illicit trafficking is a major aspect.

France notes with satisfaction that, as the words heard during the debate on this item in the First Committee bear witness, the international community as a whole has decided to tackle the dangers caused by the excessive accumulation of light weapons and small arms and their dissemination. The international community's commitment is of course reflected in many initiatives, which have already enabled us to make progress in dealing with this plague.

At the regional level, I will confine myself to referring to the West African moratorium on the import, export and production of small arms, recently adopted by the Economic Community of West African States on the initiative of Mali. This is a promising step. Similarly, the entry into force of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials is a broader response on the scale of a vast region. France fully supports these regional initiatives, which make it possible to better analyse the difficulties encountered, to adopt pragmatic measures within a specific context and to achieve concrete results.

At the global level, the work done under the aegis of the United Nations should lead to a better analysis of the various aspects of the problem and to the adoption of a proportional, integral approach, such as has been outlined by the Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms. In the context of this global approach, France is vigorously supporting the work on drawing up a convention to combat transnational organized crime, a protocol of which will deal with firearms. My country is already playing an active role in the international community's activities in this area.

Within the United Nations France is taking part in the Group of Experts established in accordance with resolution 52/38 J. In addition, at the Birmingham G-8 summit, it and the other G-8 members adopted a set of principles and a plan of action to coordinate their approaches to dealing with the problems posed by the manufacture of and illicit trafficking in firearms. Along with its European Union partners, on 26 July 1997 France adopted a programme of action for preventing and combating illicit trafficking in conventional arms. The methods for the implementation of this programme also pertain to light weapons and small arms.

Given such a commitment, France of course supports the draft resolutions presented on this item in the First Committee. It has co-sponsored A/C.1/53/L.41/Rev.1, on the illicit traffic in light weapons and small arms", and it joined in the consensus on A/C.1/53/L.7, regarding assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them. It has also co-sponsored the German draft resolution (A/C.1/L.31/Rev.1) regarding the consolidation of peace through specific disarmament measures.

This commitment naturally called for France to co-sponsor draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1, submitted by Japan. France supports the convening of an international conference on the illicit trade in light weapons and small arms in all its aspects not later than 2001. It welcomes in this regard the offer of the Swiss Government to host this conference in Geneva. Unfortunately, the inclusion of elements that have nothing to do with the draft resolution's objective prevent France from co-sponsoring it, which we most earnestly regret.

France is, of course, in favour of the right to self-determination of peoples. Having said that, we believe that the paragraph on this subject has no place in this draft resolution, which should be focused on the very important issue of dealing with the problems raised by light weapons and small arms. Furthermore, we believe that, in the context of this draft resolution, the paragraph could be used to justify reprehensible activities. I am thinking in particular of illicit trafficking and terrorist activities that interfere with the peaceful resolution of crises or situations of tension.

For these reasons, France will abstain on this paragraph, while voting in favour of the draft resolution as a whole. We hope that in the future the authors will be able to delete what we believe is perhaps the final obstacle to the draft resolution's adoption by consensus.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Pakistan favours the international community's efforts to control the illicit flow of small arms and their utilization in various conflicts, which cause great human suffering in so many places. We are therefore favourably inclined towards the proposed decision in the draft resolution to convene an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects.

Pakistan was instrumental in securing the insertion in the original draft resolution on this subject of two vital principles of the United Nations Charter.

The first principle is that of individual or collective self-defence. We believe that the transfer of arms for the purposes of individual or collective self-defence of nations and States is not illicit and is a right inherent in the United Nations Charter. It is important to reaffirm this principle in the context of this draft resolution.

Equally important is the principle of the right of peoples to self-determination — peoples under foreign and colonial occupation. If it had been a rule of international law that peoples who are being denied their right of self-determination and who are under foreign or colonial occupation should not receive the means to defend themselves and seek their liberty, we would not have so many nations seated here. Many of us are the product of the exercise of the right of self-determination, at times through using violent means to defend ourselves against colonial and foreign oppression.

We therefore cannot understand why any countries or any States should be opposed to the reference in the draft resolution before us to this fundamental principle of the United Nations Charter. We can only presume that they have particular concerns which are not being expressed openly on the floor of this Committee.

We would urge an affirmative vote on the paragraph regarding self-determination. It is central to the whole concept of nation-States and international relations.

Mr. Becher (Israel): My delegation will vote in favour of the draft resolution contained in A/C.1./53/L.13/Rev.1, but will abstain on the fourth preambular paragraph. My delegation disagrees with the introduction of the fourth preambular paragraph within the context of this specific draft resolution on small arms. Israel expresses its views on the issue of self-determination in the discussions of the Third Committee.

The Chairman: Does any other delegation wish to explain its position before we take action on the fourth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1?

I see none, so I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1, entitled "Small arms", was introduced by the representative of Japan at the 17th meeting on 28 October 1998. Sponsors additional to those listed in the draft resolution are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF.2 and Add.1 and Add.2.

The following countries have also become sponsors of the draft resolution: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia and Cameroon.

The Committee will now proceed to vote on the fourth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Azerbaijan, France, Georgia, India, Israel, Monaco, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The fourth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1 was retained by 127 votes to none, with 11 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Does any delegation wish to explain its vote after the vote?

I see none.

The Committee will now take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1, entitled "Small arms", as a whole.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

None

Abstaining:

Bahrain, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1, as a whole, was adopted by 136 votes to none, with 3 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those delegations wishing to explain their vote.

Mr. Abdullayev (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): The Russian delegation believes that the draft resolution is timely and very useful. To the extent that it affects the Russian Federation, we will take the important steps and measures provided for in it.

However, we could not support the draft resolution — for one simple reason: its fourth preambular paragraph in our view not only is inappropriate but also weakens and distorts the draft resolution. We were therefore obliged to abstain in the separate vote on the fourth preambular paragraph and in the vote on the draft resolution as a whole.

Mr. Kongstad (Norway): Norway voted in support of this draft resolution because we share the view that there is a need for a comprehensive approach to promote the control and reduction of small arms and light weapons. We also agree that an international conference might contribute to this end, and we therefore, in principle, support the holding of such a conference on small arms.

However, we believe that it is necessary to agree on the objectives and exact scope before any decision is made regarding a date and a venue for an international conference. Governments must bear the primary responsibility for addressing these issues and we note with interest and appreciation the many government initiatives to control the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled use of small arms.

Complementarity must be ensured between the proposed international conference and other relevant work already in progress, be it the elaboration of an international convention against transnational organized crime, including a protocol to combat illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, or other government efforts at the regional, subregional and national levels.

In deciding the objective and exact scope of an international conference on small arms, the experience of government initiatives should be taken into account, *inter alia*, to ensure that the international conference be supportive of ongoing initiatives and will spur on other necessary efforts.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): Following its abstention in 1995, Egypt voted last year as well as this in favour of the draft resolution on small arms. This testifies to Egypt's steadfast commitment to the pursuit of all efforts which can lead us to a safer world.

While Egypt is encouraged by the work undertaken by the Group of Governmental Experts, in which we participate, and by the recommendations contained in the Group's report, it will nevertheless continue to closely monitor the issue of small arms in order to ensure that it is dealt with in a just, balanced, non-discriminatory and comprehensive manner. It is Egypt's ardent hope that the issue of small arms will not go down the dead-end road of the transparency-in-armaments issue, which itself is being addressed in a highly selective manner.

The priorities in the field of disarmament remain the same. Nuclear weapons must be eliminated on a priority basis; efforts at non-proliferation, while necessary, do not replace concrete and irreversible disarmament measures. Other weapons of mass destruction must also be eliminated comprehensively. Conventional weapons must indeed be dealt with, but never in a selective manner. Micro-disarmament should never overshadow or downplay the cardinal importance allocated to macro-disarmament. Small arms do not exist only in conflict-ridden countries of the developing world and controlling the transfer of such arms should not be viewed as an opportunity to curb the Charter-based right of all countries, including developing countries, to acquire the means of their legitimate self-defence.

Furthermore, "small arms" does not necessarily mean "primitive arms" or "simple arms". There exist today small arms which are highly advanced and lethal and which must also be seen as falling within the purview of the small-arms issue. May I explain: New and advanced technologies have reduced lethality in size — miniaturized destruction. Should these new types of weapon be included and accorded the necessary attention? I dare say they should.

The new outlook with which we view the issue of small arms does not, however, prevent us from posing this pertinent question: What is the final objective that we seem to seek here by virtue of this draft resolution? Is it an international conference to be convened not later than 2001, as operative paragraph 1 states? In attempting to address this question, a number of salient facts rally one upon another, as follows.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons cannot be portrayed as being the cause of conflict; rather, it may be seen as a possible catalyst for exacerbating already existing or underlying conflicts, which find their roots in a number of accumulated and complex political, socio-economic or ethnic factors, which in turn give rise to political upheaval and, consequently, military struggle. Unresolved political conflicts instigate these circumstances.

Small arms and light weapons, despite their use in various conflicts, cannot result in the carrying out of aggression or the occupation of territories, nor can they initiate sudden and surprising military action. Small arms are not weapons of large-scale offensive capabilities.

In certain regions, threat emanates not from small arms and light weapons, but from weapons of mass destruction with destabilizing consequences.

All States enjoy an inherent right to self-defence, to defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to protect their national security.

The right of peoples under colonial or foreign occupation to realize their right to self-determination must be supported.

It is important to underscore the need to uphold a State's authority of control and to adopt legislation to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons through illicit transfer, especially when criminal acts are destined to lead to terrorism and/or drug trafficking.

These facts notwithstanding, the need to clearly state our priorities in the field of disarmament should be properly addressed because of their pertinence to the whole issue of small arms in order to prevent the role of small arms and light weapons in conflicts from being overshadowed and to keep their potentials within the proper proportions and well-defined parameters.

Before concluding, I should like to pay tribute in this connection to the excellent and steadfast role played by Japan in this regard, and particularly to the role played by the Chairman of the Group of Experts, Ambassador Mitsuro Donowaki, for his endless and tireless efforts in this connection.

Mr. Benítez Verson (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): First of all, I wish to commend the efforts of the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.13/Rev.1. In particular, I wish to commend the delegation of Japan for having shown the necessary flexibility to accommodate the basic concerns about the draft resolution that was originally presented.

Cuba shares the concerns that many delegations have expressed regarding the problems arising from the illicit trade in weapons, particularly in those countries that must face them without resources. For Cuba, the idea of convening an international conference to consider the problem of the illicit arms trade in all its aspects is useful. However, it is also of paramount importance that the conference take place only after a clear understanding has been reached regarding its objectives, scope and agenda. That is why, both in the preparatory process and during the conference itself, the basic principles of transparency and scope must prevail so that the opinions of all interested States are taken into account.

My country views with concern a certain tendency towards a disorderly proliferation of studies on the item before us, which deplete the meagre resources available to the United Nations. My country is not opposed to studies when States consider them to be truly necessary, but the greatest efficiency should be sought in organizing such studies and the optimal use should be made of time in order to assess their results.

Finally, we voted in favour of the fourth preambular paragraph of the draft resolution because we consider it very important that there be an explicit reference to the right of self-determination of all States and peoples in the context of such a sensitive issue as that addressed in the draft resolution.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no other delegation wishes to speak, the Committee will now take up draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.20/Rev.1, entitled "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects".

The sponsors have expressed the wish that the draft resolution be adopted by the Committee without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.20/Rev.1, entitled "Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects", was introduced by the representative of Sweden at the 17th meeting, on 28 October 1998. In this connection, a note by the Secretariat concerning the responsibilities entrusted to the Secretary-General under the draft resolution is contained in document A/C.1/53/L.59.

The sponsors are listed in the draft resolution and in document A/C.1/53/INF.2. The following country has also become a sponsor of the draft resolution: Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): As no representatives wish to explain their position before the decision, I take it that the draft resolution is adopted.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.20/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I now call upon those representatives who wish to explain their position on the decision that has just been taken.

Mr. Benítez Verson (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Cuba supported the draft resolution because we believe it is very important that this Committee give a clear political signal regarding the importance it attaches to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and particularly to Amended Protocol II on the use of mines, booby traps and other devices. We believe that the additional Protocol is potentially the most effective legal instrument that the international community can use to resolve the humanitarian problems caused by the indiscriminate, irresponsible use of anti-personnel mines. Our authorities are considering the possibility of Cuba's acceding to the Amended Protocol II, regarding restrictions on the use of mines, booby traps and other devices.

Mr. Becher (Israel): Israel joined the consensus on this draft resolution. Israel ratified the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in March 1995, participated in the Review Conference which amended Protocol II of the Convention and is presently in the process of ratifying the Amended Protocol II on landmines and the new Protocol on Blinding Laser Weapons.

Israel supports the efforts to extend accession to the Conventional Weapons Convention to as many States as possible, particularly in the Middle East region. Israel's policy stems from its desire to reduce and prevent human suffering and to restrict the use of weapons that have indiscriminate effects. However, we feel that it is necessary to maintain a balance between vital humanitarian concerns, on the one hand, and legitimate security concerns, on the other. Joint action by the international community to prevent suffering from the indiscriminate use of mines will in itself contribute to mutual trust and confidence. In this context, Israel reiterates its call on all States in the region to accede to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons as a regional confidence-building step towards enhancing the security of the entire area.

The Chairman: As no other delegations wish to explain their position on the decision regarding draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.20/Rev.1, the Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.7/Rev.2, entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them".

It is the wish of the sponsors that the draft resolution be adopted without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.7/Rev.2, entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them", was introduced by the representative of Mali at this meeting. The sponsors are listed in the draft resolution and in document A/C.1/53/INF.2 and Add.1 and Add.2. The following countries have also become sponsors: Belgium and Mozambique.

I remind the Committee that in the last line of the last preambular paragraph "Oslo" is now followed by the words "common understanding".

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): There having been no objection to the sponsors' wish that the draft resolution be adopted without a vote, I take it that it is adopted.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.7/Rev.2 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We have completed today's agenda.

Before adjourning the meeting, I would renew my appeal to delegations to notify the secretariat of those draft resolutions which they feel are ready for action to be taken upon them. Essentially, I am asking that they reconsider requested postponements and see whether they are still necessary, so that we may be able to produce a fourth informal paper announcing which draft resolutions will be acted upon on Monday afternoon.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): In order to accommodate the different concerns of many interested delegations, the draft resolution currently under agenda item 74, "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", contained in document A/C.1/53/L.21, has been subject to intensive consultations, which led to the submission of document A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2, which has been presented today. Therefore, the document for decision under this item will be document A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2. I hope that this draft resolution will enjoy overwhelming support, as has always been the case with similar draft resolutions in the past.

The meeting rose at 11.30 a.m.

United Nations A/C.1/53/PV.26

General Assembly

Fifty-third session

First Committee

26th Meeting
Monday, 9 November 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

Chairman: Mr. Mernier .... (Belgium)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 63 to 80 (*continued*)

Action on all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The secretariat has circulated informal paper 4, containing a list of the draft resolutions we were to take up this afternoon. Unfortunately, one delegation continues not to wish action to be taken on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2. Hence, it will be possible for the Committee to take action on only two draft resolutions today.

Seventeen draft resolutions remain to be voted on; I read out the list of these draft resolutions at our last meeting. Five meetings remain for the work of the First Committee, and I appeal to all delegations to reconsider their requests for deferment of voting on draft resolutions.

Today, the Committee will take action on draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.3 and A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2, which belong to cluster 1, on nuclear weapons.

Before turning to those draft resolutions, I call on representatives wishing to introduce revised draft resolutions.

Mr. Mbayu (Cameroon): I introduce draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.4/Rev.1 on behalf of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. The draft resolution addresses the need to build confidence and prevent conflicts in one of Africa's most volatile regions. Central Africa remains an area of great concern to the international community, as major conflicts still prevail in that subregion.

The Standing Advisory Committee was set up by the Secretary-General at the request of the members of the Economic Community of Central African States; it has emerged as a symbol of partnership between the international community and the States of Central Africa, with those States exercising the primary responsibility for the maintenance of peace in the subregion and the international community, through the General Assembly, providing the necessary expertise and resources.

The present draft resolution reflects the continuing evolution of that partnership towards rendering United Nations support for Central African initiatives more concrete and effective. Elements of the draft resolution take into account the Secretary-General's ground-breaking report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871), which was submitted to the Security Council and to the General Assembly. That report presented a comprehensive assessment of conflicts in Africa and offered prescriptions for their solution. We believe that those recommendations are pertinent to efforts to bring stability to Central Africa.

The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Standing Advisory Committee, at their recent meeting in Yaoundé, Cameroon, endorsed the recommendations of the report and indicated that they considered them relevant to efforts to build peace within and amongst Central African States.

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

The present draft resolution also takes into account the measures recently adopted by the Security Council after its comprehensive review of the Secretary-General's report. I have in mind in particular Security Council resolutions 1196 (1998) and 1197 (1998) and the presidential statement of 16 September 1998 (S/PRST/1998/28). In its resolution 1197 (1998), the Council encouraged communication between security-related organs of the United Nations and regional mechanisms, and invited the Secretary-General to develop cooperation with the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and subregional organizations in Africa, drawing on the United Nations Trust Fund for Improving Preparedness for Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping in Africa.

Through its presidential statement of 16 September 1998, the Council expressed its agreement with the Secretary-General that the credibility of the United Nations in Africa to a great extent depends upon the willingness of the international community to explore new means of advancing the objectives of peace and security in the African continent.

The Standing Advisory Committee's priorities for the coming year will emphasize the urgency of preventive action to ensure that new conflicts do not erupt in the subregion. To that end, heads of State will meet to set up a high council of Central African States to deal with conflicts in the subregion. The early warning mechanism called for by the heads of State will be set up in Libreville, Gabon, to monitor developments and to prevent new crises from erupting. The General Assembly is already on record as welcoming that mechanism, which has already received the financial support of the OAU and of some Member States. The Government of Gabon, as host, has made important contributions towards providing logistic support for the establishment of the mechanism. We appeal to other Member States to provide support as soon as possible.

The States members of the Standing Advisory Committee have also identified respect for human rights and the promotion of democracy as important measures to prevent the eruption of new conflicts within States. It is for that reason that the Ministers for Foreign Affairs recommended the establishment of a subregional centre for human rights and democracy in Central Africa, with its headquarters in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Finally, in order to strengthen their capacity to participate in United Nations and regional peacekeeping operations, Central African States have agreed to hold joint military exercises during 1999. While they are prepared to make the necessary effort themselves, logistic and other support is needed from the international community to make this project effective.

Let me end by thanking the Secretary-General and the other members of the Secretariat for the continued, invaluable support given to the Standing Advisory Committee. Member States that have contributed to the Trust Fund are also highly commended.

We request that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.4/Rev.1 be adopted by consensus, as its text is a recurrent one.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): On behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, South Africa wishes to introduce the revision to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50, entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament".

Members will notice that the amendments entail the deletion of the first and twelfth preambular paragraphs as contained in document A/C.1/53/L.50. The fourth preambular paragraph has also been amended, and is now reflected in two separate preambular paragraphs. The new third preambular paragraph reads:

> "*Bearing* in mind the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, adopted by consensus at the first special session devoted to disarmament, which included the Declaration, Programme of Action and Machinery for disarmament".

The new fourth preambular paragraph reads:

> "*Bearing in mind also* the objective of general and complete disarmament under effective international control".

On the basis of these amendments, it is the hope of the Non-Aligned Movement that the First Committee will be in a position to adopt draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50/Rev.1 without a vote.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): We were given to understand that a delegation had asked for instructions with respect to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2, and we hope that by tomorrow India will have received instructions from its capital.

The Chairman: I take it that the representative of Mongolia does not wish to introduce that draft resolution now.

(*spoke in French*)

The Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East".

The sponsors would like the draft resolution to be adopted without a vote. As I see no objection from any delegation, and as no delegation wishes to explain its position before a decision is taken, I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East", was introduced by the representative of Egypt at the 19th meeting, on 30 October 1998.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): May I take it that the draft resolution is adopted?

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those delegations wishing to explain their positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Becher (Israel): Israel joined the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, in spite of what it views as the draft resolution's inherent deficiencies. Israel's joining should therefore not be interpreted as agreement to all its provisions or modalities. Israel joined the consensus chiefly out of its conviction that the Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone will eventually serve as an important complement to the overall peace, security and stability of the region.

Israel firmly believes in the eventual establishment of a mutually verified nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. We would like to see such a zone free of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, as well as ballistic missiles. We believe such a zone should be established in direct negotiations between States once they recognize each other and establish full and peaceful relations. It cannot be established by anyone other than the parties themselves, nor can it be established between States claiming to be in a state of war and refusing to maintain peaceful relations.

The zone would be directly negotiated and mutually verifiable, achieving on a regional basis the non-proliferation goal of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). As has been well proven in other regions, a step-by-step approach starting with modest confidence-building measures and the gradual forging of a peaceful environment will eventually lead to more ambitious plans such as a nuclear-weapon-free zone in our region.

Consensus on this draft resolution has been maintained since 1980 because all the parties concerned have found a way to respect each other's interpretations and reservations regarding the draft resolution. My delegation hopes that this sense of responsibility will prevail in the discussion of other draft resolutions concerning the Middle East.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): I wish to make a brief comment on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.3, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East".

We are convinced that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East at an early date is the most viable way to achieve peace and security in the region. This has been Iran's consistent position since 1974, when it initiated what became General Assembly resolution 3263 (XXIX) of 9 December 1974 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.

At present the main obstacle to the realization of this initiative is Israel's refusal to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to put its nuclear weapons programme under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

The establishment of a zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East is a separate issue and should not become hostage to other matters.

My delegation would have liked to become a sponsor of this draft resolution. Because of the unnecessary references to an unrelated matter in the tenth preambular paragraph and in operative paragraph 4, we were regrettably unable to become a sponsor. We nevertheless support wholeheartedly the contents of this draft resolution.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

A recorded vote has been requested.

A separate, recorded vote has been requested on the sixth preambular paragraph.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", was introduced by the representative of Egypt on behalf of the States members of the League of Arab States at the 25th meeting, on 6 November 1998.

The Chairman: The Committee will now proceed to take action on the sixth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2, which reads as follows:

> "*Recalling* the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons on 11 May 1995, in which the Conference urged universal adherence to the Treaty as an urgent priority and called upon all States not yet party to the Treaty to accede to it at the earliest date, particularly those States that operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities".

Does any delegation wish to speak in explanation of vote before the voting on the sixth preambular paragraph?

If not, I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to the vote on the sixth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

India, Israel

Abstaining:

Cuba, Pakistan

The sixth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2 was retained by 141 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Does any delegation wish to speak in explanation of vote after the voting?

I see none.

The Committee will now proceed to take action on the draft resolution as a whole.

I shall first give the floor to those representatives wishing to speak in explanation of vote before the voting.

Mr. Becher (Israel): The Committee has before it draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2, the only draft resolution to single out a Member State.

This draft resolution, entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East", deals with an important issue but does not recognize or address the realities in the region.

Many developments have occurred in the nuclear realm in the Middle East in recent years, such as the sombre experience gained by the United Nations Special Commission and the Action Team and other dangerous proliferation efforts taken by some countries in the region. None of these developments involve Israel. On the contrary, Israel has never threatened any of its neighbours, nor has it acted in violation of international law. In fact, Israel has always demonstrated exemplary self-restraint commensurate with the sensitivity of the nuclear domain.

The motives that compel the sponsors of this draft resolution, in the opinion of my delegation, have nothing to do with the alleged specific purpose. This is emphasized by the fact that other draft resolutions concerning crucial issues are presented in a restrained and considerate manner, so as not to single out or offend any single State, whereas when it comes to baseless accusations against Israel, such restraint is nowhere to be found.

If this draft resolution truly addresses itself to the principle of universality, as its proponents cynically claim, it should be broadly applied, and Israel should not be singled out. If, on the other hand, this Committee wishes to highlight the current situation in the Middle East, it should target the real proliferators in the region, which are well known to this Committee and to the international community as a whole.

There is no factual justification for such a draft resolution, nor is there a reason to single out Israel again. It is the policy of Israel to negotiate the establishment, in due time, of the Middle East as a zone free of weapons of mass destruction and missiles. A regional nuclear-weapon-free zone should emanate from, and be supported by, all States in the region. Such a zone cannot be imposed on the regional parties. The draft resolution refers to the 1995 document but fails to quote a very relevant phrase from that document, which states that

> "the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, enhances global and regional peace and security" *(NPT/CONF.1995/32 (Part I), annex, decision 2, para. 5)*.

This is a clear and sufficient statement on the subject. The draft resolution before the Committee deviates from these agreed principles and objectives.

There are also compelling practical reasons to oppose this draft resolution. It will certainly not lead to confidence-building and reconciliation, without which further positive developments are impossible. Such a draft will not change the situation prevailing in the region. Moreover, it is bound to be dangerous and counterproductive, because it implies that the regional process can be circumvented by majority resolutions in international bodies. The sponsors of this draft resolution openly admit that their purpose is to harass Israel by trying to coerce it to act on what is essentially a sovereign right and an independent and unilateral decision.

This draft resolution renders a great disservice to the cause of non-proliferation in the Middle East by creating the illusion that it tackles the real issue of proliferation. Unfortunately, the text of this draft resolution also does not reflect the positive developments in the peace process and the changes on the ground. My delegation therefore calls upon all delegations to vote against this draft resolution.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): Since the inception of this draft resolution, the United States has opposed the text, now entitled "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

We have always considered it inappropriate to single out for criticism one State for its failure to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The United States believes that no matter how much the draft resolution may be softened, it suffers from the defects of its underlying intent and does not deserve the approval of this body.

This year the draft resolution is even more objectionable. In a year when two countries that have tested nuclear weapons are not mentioned by name in a draft resolution that would criticize their actions, how can this body justify criticizing by name another State which has not tested nuclear weapons?

What is more, we have just witnessed the signing of the Wye Memorandum, which we hope will reinvigorate the Middle East peace process. Does a draft resolution like this, especially considering its origins, contribute to the peace process, or will it make that process more difficult? We believe the answer is clear.

In the light of the current situation, we urge other members to consider these arguments carefully and not support this draft resolution. For its part, the United States will vote against.

The Chairman: As no other delegation wishes to explain its position before the vote, I give the floor to the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2 as a whole.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Canada, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Myanmar, Norway, Singapore

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2 as a whole was adopted by 134 votes to 2, with 10 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Angola informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Does any delegation wish to explain its vote after the vote?

Mr. Benítez Verson (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Cuba supports draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2, which we have just adopted, because we believe that it contributes to the Middle East peace efforts. There is no doubt that the proliferation of nuclear weapons, far from reducing existing tensions, would be a major obstacle to achieving lasting peace in this delicate region.

At the same time, my delegation would like it to be known that its vote in favour of the draft resolution in no way changes the position of Cuba regarding the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which we believe to be a discriminatory and selective international system that legitimizes unacceptable privileges for the nuclear-weapon States. That is why my country abstained in the vote on the sixth preambular paragraph.

Ms. Kunadi (India): My country's long-standing views on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons are well known. We therefore were obliged to vote against the sixth preambular paragraph, while abstaining on the draft resolution as a whole.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.21/Rev.2.

Programme of work

The Chairman: To organize consideration of draft resolutions this week, I convened a meeting of the Bureau on Friday afternoon to review the draft resolutions remaining for action. I would like the Committee to take note of the Bureau's feelings in this regard.

The most difficult draft resolution is, of course, A/C.1/53/L.22, "Nuclear testing", to which we have seven amendments. After consultation with other delegations, we would like to consider it on Thursday, 12 November, first thing in the morning. To facilitate the consideration of this draft resolution, a composite paper containing all texts will be prepared by the secretariat for reference use.

I would like also to say a few words on the medium-term plan, which I mentioned last week. I have not yet responded to the request of the Chairman of the Fifth Committee, contained in document A/C.1/53/8, for the views of the First Committee on the relevant proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for 1998-2001, as I have not yet received any comments to convey to him. He had requested me to respond by last Friday, 6 November.I would like to respond to the request of the Chairman of the Fifth Committee by the end of this week at the latest. If I do not receive comments by then, I will reply to the Fifth Committee Chairman simply that the First Committee has no comments on the revisions made to the medium-term plan.

I would like now to give an idea of what draft resolutions could be considered tomorrow: A/C.1/53/L.12, addressing the Conference on Disarmament report; A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1, on transparency; A/C.1/53/L.45, on the International Court of Justice; A/C.1/53/L.49, on bilateral nuclear disarmament; A/C.1/53/L.50, on the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament; and A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2, introduced by Mongolia. The list might change in one way or another by tomorrow. But this gives Committee members an idea of what our plan of action tomorrow could be.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): My delegation has noted your proposed programme for tomorrow, Mr. Chairman, and we have no objection to it.

You mentioned that before making your proposal to put A/C.1/53/L.22 and the proposed amendments off until Thursday you had consulted various delegations. Unfortunately, my delegation was perhaps forgotten in the process of your contacts. Since we are perhaps not the most directly interested party, this is quite natural.

I have no objection to the consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 and its proposed amendments on Thursday. I would merely like to add something to this proposal, which is that we believe it would be convenient for the progress of our work if draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.24/Rev.1, on the fissile materials treaty, and draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.11, on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), were taken up after consideration of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 and the amendments thereto.

Ms. Kunadi (India): My delegation has also noted, Mr. Chairman, that you intend to have a vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 on Thursday. This would be acceptable to us, but I seek clarification. You mentioned that the secretariat would be bringing out a composite paper on the amendments which have been put forward on this draft resolution. We would like to know the status of this composite paper, and why we need it when we have separate amendments which have already been proposed.

The Chairman: I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung (Secretary of the Committee): In response to the inquiry of the representative of India, I would like to say that because there are so many amendments to various paragraphs, and additional paragraphs, it seems advisable to have a composite paper — an informal paper — containing all the amendments for easy reference. This would mean that representatives had only one piece of paper with all the amendments in front of them, rather than many different pieces of paper, which would make it very difficult to comprehend how to conduct the sequence of the voting. However, if delegations consider that they can manage it without any difficulty, of course the secretariat will not produce this paper. It is really up to delegations to decide whether this would assist them in the voting.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Perhaps I might add that the purpose is to facilitate the lives of the smallest delegations, which cannot always remain in the room. The paper would change absolutely nothing with respect to the status of existing papers, each of which has an "L" designation.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Again, I would have thought that any decision with regard to procedures would have to be taken by the Committee itself. While I have no problem with the secretariat's trying to help delegations in their work, I would hope that the same kind of treatment is meted out to every draft resolution on which there are amendments. Why is draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 receiving such special treatment? Is it because there are seven amendments to it? Well, we can put forward seven amendments to other draft resolutions, too.

I do not think that we should adopt unilaterally a procedure for any draft resolution that is different, until and unless the concurrence of the Committee has been obtained. I would suggest that this principle should be followed, because otherwise we shall get into discriminatory practices, which we hope we shall be able to correct during the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22.

Mr. González (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I strongly support the procedure you have suggested, Mr. Chairman, which, by the way, is often used in other Committees. It makes the work easier, and has nothing to do with procedural affairs or the substance, since the Chairman states, as you have done, that it does not change the status of the document. Moreover, in my view, it is not in the interests of the sponsors of amendments themselves for us to have seven, 700 or 7,000 amendments in various different documents, because then we shall be lost, and we may easily make mistakes. In my opinion, it is in the interests of the sponsors to get a favourable vote on their amendments, and, from that perspective, the fact of having a consolidated paper from the Chair will obviously promote the content of the amendments. And we are talking about achieving resolutions whose content reflects clear support, not momentary confusion.

Now, if we want to embark on procedural mechanisms, we can do that, too. But let us then take a clear political decision. We can choose the option whereby we submit amendments and certain delegations do not have the chance to examine them. As you very aptly said, Mr. Chairman, there are smaller delegations from developing countries that have fewer resources, fewer means, and that do not have representatives in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. Their only chance to participate in the global disarmament process is in the First Committee. If there is the will to give them a chance to participate, fine; then let us have the consolidated paper you suggested. But if, on the contrary, we are trying to restrict this activity to an "exclusive" group of connoisseurs on this topic, well, then, that is a different option.

Mr. Moher (Canada): I do not think anyone in this room is surprised that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 will be among the more difficult ones for the First Committee this year. That is why I am rather disappointed that we are getting into what I consider to be an unnecessary procedural debate at this point.

There are three points I would like to make. First, if an apology is due to you, Mr. Chairman, for the reference to Thursday as the date for the draft resolution to be acted upon, I give you that apology. I had consulted with the key delegations. I thought there was an understanding that we could go forward on Thursday, and I communicated that to you. My understanding is that there is an agreement that it will be acted upon on Thursday.

Secondly, with regard to the amendments, I would suggest that this question is very easily dealt with. If the proposers of the amendments agree with the secretariat's idea, it can be done. If they do not agree, it is not done: end of debate.

The idea was not that of Canada or any other sponsor of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22. I want that on the record. I think that the implementation of that rests entirely with those who are in control of the original documents. Period.

On the third point, since reference was made to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.24/Rev.1 on fissile material, it is my understanding that a number of key delegations have agreed that it should go forward on Friday, and Canada, as one of those delegations, certainly confirms that agreement. I do not think we need to get into a long, sterile procedural debate here this afternoon.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): It is not my delegation's intention, either, to enter into a procedural discussion. I just want, first of all, to clarify that the understanding that I gathered from your statement, Sir, was that the Chair had conducted the consultations, not that Canada had conducted the consultations on behalf of the Chair. In that case, I would have said "Yes, I was consulted". I had no problem with Thursday, but it was my understanding from your statement, Sir, that the Chair had conducted consultations, in which case I was not consulted. That is the only point I wanted to make. Yes, Pakistan thought that it might be consulted or that it should be consulted.

Secondly, with regard to the amendments, it is not that we believe that this is a Canadian idea. Canada sometimes has good ideas, but the point at issue is the following. There are seven separate amendments emanating from different sources. Each is contained in a separate document. Each has a different import. We do not wish these amendments to be confused or considered as a whole. They are separate amendments, some with greater support, some with lesser. We understand that, and therefore, in accordance with the rules, action on these has to be taken separately. That is the only point. If the secretariat's paper confuses or prejudices that point, we would object to the paper. If it does not, we have no problem with the paper.

Let me also add that it is also possible that, in addition to those seven amendments which are in documents, there will be additional amendments emanating from the floor, in which case I hope that we will be able to follow everything that is on paper and not on paper. With that, I would have no difficulty if that is the understanding on which we are proceeding.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): I appreciate this opportunity to explain the status of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/53/L.5, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific".

Following consultations among interested delegations, we asked for the postponement of the consideration of the draft resolution a few days ago. At this point, I just want to clarify that our consultations are almost over and it seems to me that we will be able to submit draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.5/Rev.1 this afternoon to the secretariat. In that case, we would like to have the document circulated tomorrow and perhaps action might be taken on the draft resolution tomorrow. That is our understanding.

The Chairman: There are possible financial implications of the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/53/L.5. We therefore have to wait until we have clarification on that point before we make a decision on that draft resolution. It is not only that there may be no further objections to considering it; we cannot act on it before we have a financial implications report.

(*spoke in French*)

I now wish to return to the matter of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22. I would put a very simple question, pointing out once again that the single paper under discussion is designed simply to make things easier for the smaller delegations. It has no impact on procedural matters or on the substance.

Is there any formal objection to the preparation and distribution by the secretariat of such a paper? If there is any such objection, we will abandon the idea.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I thought I had stated my position quite clearly. On the basis of the understanding that it has no impact on the separate status of each of the documents, we would have no objection to the paper.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): That being the case, the secretariat shall proceed to preparing the paper, which will be circulated tomorrow.

I appeal once again to delegations to reflect on the request to defer voting on draft resolutions. I wish to remind them that we have only four more meetings at which to vote on 15 draft resolutions, some of which are extremely difficult. We will have no opportunity for an extra meeting.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.

United Nations

A/C.1/53/PV.27

General Assembly
Fifty-third session

Official Records

First Committee
27th Meeting
Tuesday, 10 November 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Mernier .... (Belgium)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda items 63 to 80 *(continued)*

Action on all draft resolutions submitted under all items

The Chairman: Delegations have before them informal paper No. 5 containing the list of draft resolutions that the Committee will take up today. If there are no comments on that list, I shall call on delegations wishing to introduce revised draft resolutions.

Mr. Enkhsaikhan (Mongolia): Since draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.1 was introduced by my delegation a couple of days ago I can be quite brief. The aim of the draft resolution, which enjoys the overall support of the membership, including the nuclear-weapon States, is to address the question of the nuclear-weapon-free status of Mongolia. Because of its geographical location and some other factors, at this stage Mongolia has difficulty in establishing an internationally recognized single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone. The heretofore followed formula for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in this case cannot be automatically applied. We recognize that. However, that does not mean that Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status cannot be defined, internationally recognized and respected. On the contrary, bearing in mind its unique geographical location, Mongolia and its negotiating partners have approached this question creatively and mindful of the prevailing political realities.

As a result of the consultations and negotiations held since October 1997, we have agreed that Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status would be credible and durable if its overall security were ensured and internationally recognized. That understanding forms the basis of the very concept of this draft resolution and the spirit of the approach of the States concerned to it, and is reflected in the draft resolution.

The draft resolution calls for the cooperation of Members of the United Nations, especially of the States concerned, in making specific arrangements that could accommodate both the particular needs and interests of Mongolia, including the strengthening of its nuclear-weapon-free status, and the legitimate interests of its neighbours, as well as stability in the region in general. On this Mongolia and the five nuclear-weapon States all agree.

It is in this spirit that the General Assembly would invite the States concerned to work with Mongolia in taking the necessary measures to consolidate and strengthen Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status.

The need to issue a revised version of the draft resolution is connected with a request by one of the States concerned to make it absolutely clear that all five nuclear-weapon States are equally involved. This emphasis has found reflection in the sole change being made in operative paragraph 3, where the words "States concerned" are to be replaced by the words "Member States, including the five nuclear-weapon States".

My country maintains good-neighbourly relations with its neighbours and pursues a policy of balanced relationship with them. The General Assembly would endorse and support that relationship as an important element of

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

strengthening regional peace, security and stability. This draft resolution is forward-looking. It is built on goodwill and the good-neighbourly relations that Mongolia enjoys with its neighbours. It is also in the spirit of Sino-Russian declarations on bilateral relations and declarations with respect to their third neighbours.

The appropriate arrangements to consolidate and strengthen Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status are yet to be defined. In this connection, the draft resolution asks the Secretary-General of the United Nations and relevant United Nations bodies, including perhaps the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, to provide the necessary assistance to Mongolia and report thereon at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly. By operative paragraph 7 of the draft resolution the General Assembly would include the question in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session.

We express the hope that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote, which would reflect the spirit of the negotiations that have resulted in this draft resolution.

Mr. Soutar (United Kingdom): I shall endeavour to be even briefer than the previous speaker in introducing draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.12/Rev.1 and explaining the background to it.

When I introduced draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.12, on the report of the Conference on Disarmament, I said that the draft acknowledged the fact that after a period of reflection in 1998 the Conference on Disarmament had re-embarked on substantive negotiations and accordingly looked forward to a resumption of productive work in 1999. Since then a number of delegations have welcomed the forward-looking nature of the draft resolution and have been kind enough to make suggestions for doing this in a balanced way which closely follows the conclusions of the report of the Conference on Disarmament itself. I have tried to incorporate these suggestions into A/C.1/53/L.12/Rev.1, which has been circulated by the Secretariat.

Delegations will note that operative paragraph 3 now refers to the recommendations that the two Ad Hoc Committees established in 1998 should be re-established at the beginning of the 1999 session. Similarly, operative paragraph 4 now refers to the recommendation made by the last President of the 1998 session that the consultations under item 1 of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament be resumed at the start of the 1999 session. In operative paragraph 5 delegations will note that the text has reverted to the exact wording of the report of the Conference on Disarmament, and in operative paragraph 6 the text has reverted to the wording of the corresponding resolution last year.

In conclusion, I hope that with the changes contained in A/C.1/53/L.12/Rev.1 the draft resolution can be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Ahmed (Bangladesh): May I draw attention to revised draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.5/Rev.1, on the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. In view of this revised draft resolution, the amendment circulated earlier by my delegation in document A/C.1/53/L.46 is hereby withdrawn.

Mr. Thapa (Nepal): In relation to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.5/Rev.1 entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific", my delegation clarified before the Committee yesterday that we had held informal consultations by which we tried to accommodate the concerns of different delegations. As a result, the Committee has before it document A/C.1/53/L.5/Rev.1. With the withdrawal of the amendment by the delegation of Bangladesh, I hope that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.5/Rev.1 entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific" will be adopted by the Committee without a vote.

The Chairman: If no other delegation wishes to introduce a revised draft resolution, the Committee will now proceed to take action on the various draft resolutions listed in informal paper No. 5. I call first on delegations wishing to make general statements on cluster 1, "Nuclear weapons".

Mr. Vidricaire (Canada): In approaching our decision on the draft resolutions before us today, Canada is pleased to express its particular appreciation for draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status". We welcome both the sentiments expressed therein and the fact that it has been prepared in careful consultation with interested States. Canada strongly supports this draft resolution and hopes that it will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Campbell (Australia): I would like to make some comments on amendments that have been put forward in the First Committee to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22, on nuclear testing.

It should come as no surprise to any of us that the two countries which have conducted nuclear tests this year should be trying to deflect the message that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 contains. After all, the purpose of that draft resolution is to express the General Assembly's concern and displeasure at those tests, which come so quickly on the heels of the successful negotiation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), a Treaty which the vast majority of us have signed and which established an international norm against testing. The two countries concerned seek to defend their actions in a variety of ways. They seek to share the blame, which cannot be shared. They seek to put testing in a North-South context, a place it does not deserve. By pointing to the 2,000 tests that preceded their own, they claim that criticism of their actions is discriminatory. We say to them that the testing of the past, which the international community — we, all of us — worked together so hard to end cannot now justify the testing of today. The link is a spurious one.

By pointing to the alleged slow pace of nuclear disarmament generally, the two countries also seek to defend their actions. I simply say to the Committee that at a time when the nuclear-weapon States are drawing down their nuclear arsenals it is singularly inappropriate for the General Assembly to condone Indian and Pakistani excuses for developing theirs. The threat of nuclear proliferation and the challenge Indian and Pakistani testing poses to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will not hasten the arrival of a nuclear-free world.

The two countries seek to justify their actions in terms of their national security interests. We ask ourselves what message that sends to other would-be proliferators. We believe their security has been weakened rather than strengthened by their actions.

It is for these reasons that we call on the Committee to adopt the draft resolution contained in A/C.1/53/L.22 unamended. Might I also remind the Committee and those delegations that have asked the sponsors to consider updating the 1995 resolution on nuclear testing, for to do so would be fair and consistent, that in 1995 there were no amendments either formal or informal moved against the draft resolution. We ask the Committee not to water down the message that so many other regional and international organizations have sent, not just to New Delhi and Islamabad but also to the international community at large.

Mr. González (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation would like to refer to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2, sponsored by Mongolia and the Philippines. First let me put on record that we completely agree with the desire expressed by the Ambassador of Mongolia that the draft resolution should be adopted by consensus. I would also like to state clearly that my delegation's overriding policy is always to judge draft resolutions on their merits. This draft resolution clearly has merit, especially its legal content — more specifically, the second preambular paragraph, which refers to General Assembly resolution 2625 (XXV) of 1970, which we consider to be one of the most crucial resolutions in the history of the United Nations. It identifies the seven fundamental principles of the Charter and considers them *jus cogens*, the peremptory norms of international law, as mentioned in the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties. We would have preferred a reference to that resolution, but the second preambular paragraph nevertheless makes a clearly significant legal contribution to the subject of international security, which calls for a new conceptualization on our part, given the new international challenges.

At the same time, we support the draft resolution sponsored by Mongolia and the Philippines, because the conceptual approach that emerges from a reading of it is clearly the promotion of confidence-building measures. That is a necessary condition for the creation of a climate conducive to peace, international security and, obviously, disarmament.

Mr. Dzundev (the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia): My delegation hopes that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status", will be adopted without a vote, as has been the case with similar resolutions in previous years. Mongolia, as a landlocked country like my own, is developing a positive, peaceful and friendly policy which we particularly appreciate. Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2, and in particular its operative paragraphs 2 and 3, in our view should be considered an important example and a positive step for future discussions in the United Nations and elsewhere on the issue of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): The other day I had the opportunity and pleasure of responding to the statement that was made by my colleague from Canada when he introduced draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22, on nuclear testing. I have equal pleasure in responding to the statement we have just heard from the representative of Australia, who was responding, as I understand it, to the several amendments that have been introduced to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22.

Before I begin, it is perhaps appropriate to recall that Australia is a country which at one time allowed its territory to be utilized by another State for the conduct of nuclear-test explosions. In doing so Australia has contributed to the vertical as well as the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. Even today Australia benefits from the nuclear umbrella and the protection afforded by its alliance with a nuclear-weapon State. If Australia is wedded to the goal of nuclear disarmament, then let us hear the Ambassador of Australia disavow the doctrine of nuclear deterrence that is embedded in the alliance to which his country is a party. We would then be able to say to both Australia and Canada that, like New Zealand, they at least have the courage of their convictions.

That, unfortunately, is not the case today. If the present Government of Australia were committed to nuclear disarmament, we would have expected it to present for consideration and adoption by the Assembly, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the several proposals contained in the report of the Canberra Commission, which was sponsored by the Government of Australia but on which Australia now has fallen strangely silent.

The Ambassador of Australia said that the 2,000 tests in the past are no justification for present testing. That is true, but it does not mean that by focusing a draft resolution only on the present testing one should try to condone the past testing to which Australia was a party, or to say that that was "okay". As one representative said in the Conference on Disarmament, testing by nuclear-weapon States could not be mentioned in the report of the Conference on Disarmament because they were nuclear-weapon States, but testing by India and Pakistan should be mentioned in that report because they are non-nuclear-weapon States. That kind of double standard was indeed propounded in order to justify the kind of selective draft resolution that has now been put forward by Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

My colleague has said that India and Pakistan are trying to project this in a North-South dimension and that it should not be seen in a North-South dimension. That is true. Very good. But we see a draft resolution emanating from three countries, Canada in the north, and Australia and New Zealand down under, but they are all members of the northern group. These countries put forward a draft resolution pertaining to South Asia and hold no consultations with the countries concerned, offer no consultations, engage in no negotiations, submit the draft resolution and say at the outset, "We will not entertain amendments", and then go to the Group of Western European and other States in this Committee and take a decision there not to accept amendments to the draft resolution. Let them deny it. Is this not the North? And is it not the North acting against the South? Is it Pakistan and India which have made this a North-South issue, or is it the sponsors of the draft resolution that have made it into a North-South issue? Clearly, there are overtones of North and South in this draft resolution. What is more, there are other overtones which I do not even care to refer to here.

This is a discriminatory draft resolution. It is discriminatory because it refers to specific countries; no countries were mentioned in 1995. First there was a Security Council resolution against the two countries which was adopted without their participation, just as now attempts are being made to adopt draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 without the participation of the two countries concerned. The same treatment, same process and same procedure are being adopted. We are told that this is not discriminatory. They will not consult. They will not engage in negotiations. They will not accept amendments and they will make motions of no action. This is democratic? This is in the great spirit of the democracies that have sponsored this draft resolution? Naturally, there will be amendments, and more amendments, to it. Certainly, this draft resolution does not deserve the support of the South. It does not even deserve the support of the North, at least of those who believe in fairness, equity and equal treatment for all countries. This is a discriminatory draft resolution, and I urge all members of the Committee to vote against it. I appeal to all those who are fair-minded to oppose the draft resolution, the motives of which are coloured and the origins of which are dubious.

Mr. Chang (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to make brief comments on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2. Korea attaches importance to the role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in promoting a nuclear-weapon-free world. We believe that the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones have made a significant contribution to nuclear disarmament. In the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, a consensus by the States in the region is indispensable.

In this vein, the declaration by Mongolia of its nuclear-weapon-free status is also an encouraging step in this direction. In welcoming Mongolia's initiative, we look forward to the further development of the concept of the single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone. In this connection, my delegation also hopes that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): I was not going to participate in this debate. It seemed to me to start with that it was a debate between the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22, on nuclear testing, and the States that were directly affected by that draft resolution. But I have been prompted to speak by the attempt to categorize the draft resolution as a North-South issue. I cannot agree with that.

If we are to debate the issue, my suggestion is that we debate it on the substance of the matter and not attempt to categorize it in any way as North versus South. Here, I think I should first state that South Africa is to date not a sponsor of the draft resolution. I am not speaking here as a sponsor but as a country that is a part of the South.

South Africa would agree with several of the points that have been made on nuclear testing in general and with the opposition to nuclear testing in general. South Africa opposed previous nuclear testing. South Africa opposes any current tests to improve or to develop new nuclear weapons. South Africa has opposed and will oppose nuclear-test explosions in the same way as we did in 1995 when South Africa co-sponsored the resolution on the testing being conducted at that time by France and China.

Also on this North-South issue: as far as I am aware — at least it is the principle upon which we operate — the South, if that is the way we are going to use the terminology, has a very firm and very clear position on nuclear testing. That position is contained in a document adopted by the heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement in Cartagena in 1995 and was reinforced in the Final Document adopted by the Non-Aligned Movement in Durban this year, in which the heads of State or Government said that they firmly rejected all kinds of nuclear tests which are being carried out, whatever their serious environmental consequences and their contrary effects on peace, security and international stability. They strongly deplored the resumption and continuation of nuclear testing and called upon all the nuclear-weapon States to act in a manner consistent with the negotiations and objectives of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and to cease conducting any nuclear testing. They supported the total elimination of all nuclear testing without any exception. They welcomed the efforts to conclude the negotiations on the CTBT by 1996 and emphasized that any activity relating to further research and development of nuclear arsenals or their production would run contrary to the spirit of the CTBT. That is the position of the South — at least as I understand it.

The Ambassador of Pakistan referred to the position of Durban, and here I wish to respond directly to a remark that was made by the Ambassador of Pakistan to me in private; I will also read this out in fairness, because the point being made by the Ambassador of Pakistan is a fair one. The first point the heads of State or Government made on this issue was that they

> "recalled their principled positions on nuclear disarmament and the related issues of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear tests. They expressed their concern at the slow pace of progress towards nuclear disarmament, which constitutes their primary disarmament objective. They noted the complexities arising from nuclear tests in South Asia, which underlined the need to work even harder to achieve their disarmament objectives, including the elimination of nuclear weapons. They considered positively the commitment of the parties concerned in the region to exercise restraint, which contributes to regional security, to discontinue nuclear tests and not to transfer nuclear weapons-related material, equipment and technology. They further stressed the significance of universal adherence to the CTBT, including by all Nuclear Weapon States, and commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on fissile materials (decision CD/1547), which, *inter alia*, should accelerate the process of nuclear disarmament. They also stressed their positions against unilateral coercive or discriminatory measures which have been applied against Non-Aligned countries. They reiterated the need for bilateral dialogue to secure peaceful solutions on all outstanding issues and the promotion of confidence and security building measures and mutual trust." (*A/53/667, annex I, para. 113*)

I hope the Ambassador of Pakistan will agree with me that that is a full quotation on the issue from the Non-Aligned Movement summit. The point that I am trying to make, and this is what I took the floor to respond to, was the categorization of the issue of nuclear testing as a North-South issue. If it is to be a North-South issue then I think the South throughout its entire history has firmly stood in total opposition to nuclear testing.

The Chairman: There are still three speakers on the list to make general statements on cluster 1. May I remind delegations that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 is on the agenda for Thursday. I appeal to delegations to be brief and to reserve their wisdom for the consideration in due time of that draft resolution.

Mr. Campbell (Australia): Lest there be any mistake about the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 let me read out the list: Australia, the Bahamas, Belgium, Bolivia, Canada, the Congo, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Fiji, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Mongolia, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Solomon Islands and Kazakhstan - a good North-South mix.

The second point I should like to make, in regard to whether or not motions of no action are democratic or undemocratic, is simply to say that if there is a vote on this issue in this Committee I would hardly describe the procedure as undemocratic.

Thirdly, may I say in response to the comments made about Australia by our colleague from Pakistan that he, coming from a footballing nation, he will know what it means when I say, "Play the ball, not the man".

Mr. Moher (Canada): Canada does not play that version of football. First, the approach that Canada has advocated on this issue is to express the hope that the Committee will act on the draft resolution as submitted. That draft was prepared as the result of extensive consultation reaching back at least a month, and there have been conversations with the two States concerned. However States wish to characterize that, those conversations have taken place. We are looking for a straightforward decision on the draft resolution as submitted. Obviously, against that background we oppose the amendments that have been put forward and we have been explaining our attitude and approach to this in a number of meetings that have taken place. I do not propose to take up the time of the First Committee to repeat those arguments.

There are four quick points I would like to make. First, history: in our view, we should be looking at this issue in 1998, not at the phase of the Garden of Eden, not at the phase of 1960 and not in 1980. We should be looking at it in 1998, and that is the point from which Canada approaches this issue.

Secondly, the question of discrimination or not: this draft resolution is discriminatory. It is testing versus non-testing. That is the only discrimination in the draft resolution. Quite frankly, I only become excited on this issue when people start to imply that my Government and my country are motivated by other rather unpleasant emotions or motivations. Testing versus non-testing; what does the Committee think?

The third point is the division between North and South. I welcome very much the comments made by South Africa. Canada obviously cannot speak authoritatively for the Non-Aligned Movement. But let me point out that 187 countries of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and more than 150 of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) make a fairly large constituency which is not North and is not South, but is a global community expressing a concern.

Finally, I wish to repeat that the question before the Committee is very simple: does the international community condone nuclear testing or not - yes or no? In our view, the answer is no. If delegations agree with that, then I hope they will support the draft resolution as it is without amendment.

Ms. Kunadi (India): I was not intending to speak today either but am compelled to do so in view of the debate that has taken place on the draft resolution on nuclear testing, contained in document A/C.1/53/L.22. You, Mr. Chairman, have yourself stated that the draft resolution would be taken up on Thursday, 12 November. I was therefore quite surprised when Australia made a very substantive statement on this matter, and, naturally, a discussion has followed.

In spite of what the Canadian Ambassador has said, I would like to state here that at no stage did any consultations take place with my delegation on substantive aspects of this draft resolution. We were indeed consulted on the procedural aspect as to when the draft resolution might be put to a vote, but no consultations have taken place on the substance of the draft resolution. Neither were we consulted or asked to give our comments on the draft resolution submitted by the sponsors.

We maintain that although the draft resolution seeks to address the broad issue of nuclear testing, unfortunately, it focuses only on the tests conducted in May this year. We maintain that the draft resolution is selective and discriminatory in its approach, and its objective is not to treat all relevant aspects of testing but to isolate two countries in a particular region.

On the other hand, while the draft resolution does not address nuclear testing as a whole, it goes far beyond the subject, drawing references to Security Council resolution 1172 (1998), which addressed a number of issues that have nothing to do with nuclear tests. My country was not given an opportunity either, as provided for in the Charter, to participate in the Council's discussion before that resolution was adopted. Therefore, we find these references in the draft resolution to be totally out of place.

We will maintain that the draft resolution is discriminatory and moulded in a self-serving manner. It does not promote the goal of nuclear disarmament. It will be counter-productive. With a view to making the draft resolution a balanced one and to addressing and focusing on the question of nuclear testing, we have introduced certain amendments to the draft resolution which have been circulated. We hope that an opportunity will be given to the Committee to take a decision on the substance of these amendments rather than proceeding to vote on the draft resolution as a whole, as has been stated. We have submitted amendments and would like these amendments to be considered.

These were some of the remarks I wished to make. We know that we will have an opportunity in a couple of days to address the matter in greater detail, but since this occasion was taken by some delegations to raise this matter now, I am also compelled to make some response.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I must also say that it was not my intention to go into such depth in the discussion of this matter today. I was reserving my resources for Thursday, but since the discussion has started I would like to respond to some of the comments made by my colleagues from Australia, Canada and South Africa.

In starting, let me recall a referendum held in my country some years ago in which the proposition to be voted on was put in such a way that it meant, "If you believe in Islam I am elected for five years". If one believed in Islam and answered "yes" to the question, the result was "I am elected for five years".

The question put by my colleague from Canada about nuclear testing is in the same vein. "If you believe that testing is bad, vote for this draft resolution". We are not saying that testing is good. What we are saying is that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 is discriminatory. It is discriminatory because it focuses on only two countries, it focuses on only one region, it refers to a Security Council resolution, it did not do so in 1995, and so on. It is not the same thing to say that if you believe that nuclear testing is bad then vote for this draft resolution. It is not as simple as that. Our friends are fully aware of this.

My colleague from Australia says, "Play the ball, not the man". That is true, but what happens when you are playing a foul ball — and A/C.1/53/L.22 is a foul ball. My colleagues say it is democratic. It is not democratic. What is democratic about a procedure in which a draft resolution is prepared by a caucus of countries, it is not negotiated, it is put on the table, and it is said there will be no amendments to the draft resolution? That caucus, a larger caucus of the North, then takes a decision: "We are not going to entertain any amendments, and we are going to vote for no action". All that is done in the caucus of the North. Is that right or not? Did I create that caucus of the North? No. That is where all these processes have happened. My colleague from South Africa says, "Of course, this is not North-South". I trust that South Africa was not speaking as the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, because I do not believe that that was the case.

I am very grateful to my colleague from South Africa for having quoted both from Cartagena and from the Durban document. Those of my colleagues who heard the quotations would see that the position of the Non-Aligned Movement on testing is a balanced position. It takes into account the positive developments that have taken place since May. It welcomes some of those developments and calls for nuclear disarmament. All that is a balanced position of the Non-Aligned Movement, and if by some osmosis the Canadian draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 were to be transformed into a resolution that reflects the Durban document, I can tell the Committee that my country would be very happy, and I am sure that the entire Non-Aligned Movement would be very happy with that. but I suspect that this may not happen to this draft resolution, at least on the part of the sponsors.

My colleague from Canada has said it is not history that we want, that we are referring not to 1995 but to 1998. My distinguished friend should also bear in mind that we do not refer to May 1998, but to November 1998. Between May and November 1998 there have been important developments of which all the sponsors are well aware. But they wish to ignore that and to condemn the two countries concerned on the criteria of May 1998? If that is so, why not go to 1995 or 1991 or beyond into history. Why stop at May 1995? That is discriminatory, and that is the discrimination that is contained in this draft resolution.

Canada says all tests are bad. Okay. We know that when we were negotiating the CTBT we said all nuclear testing should be prohibited - nuclear-test explosions as well as non-nuclear test-explosion testing, laboratory testing, sub-critical testing - everything should be banned, because everything contributes to the vertical or horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Treaty did not include our position. It included only nuclear-explosive testing. But does that mean that we all accept the position of the nuclear-weapon States that only nuclear-explosive testing is to be condemned and not non-explosive testing? Are we going to ignore the sub-critical testing, the fusion research, the laboratory tests that are taking place? Does Canada condone the qualitative development of nuclear weapons through such testing? If Canada does not, why not mention that in a draft resolution that is entitled "Nuclear testing". If it does not include that, is that not discriminatory? That is another facet of discrimination in this draft resolution.

It is not so simple. It is not like the referendum to which I referred. We are all true believers, but let us not reduce that belief to *ad absurdum* proportions and ask people to vote as if they do not have the ability to discern what is right, what is wrong and what is grey.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Before calling on the last two speakers I should like to remind members that this afternoon's programme should not turn into another general debate. I would like us to stick to the agenda in informal paper No. 5.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): I shall undertake to hold the floor only briefly this time. When I spoke earlier, and when I speak at all times, I speak on behalf of South Africa unless I say otherwise. I say that in response to the question put to me by the Ambassador of Pakistan. In this instance I did not think it was necessary for South Africa to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement - and I emphasize again that the last time I spoke, I spoke on behalf of South Africa - because the language contained in both the Durban summit document and the Cartagena document allows the Non-Aligned Movement heads of State or Government to speak for themselves.

Mr. González (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation is guided by a spirit of cooperation with the Chair, but we are a little perplexed, because it seems that we have already carried out and even exhausted the debate on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22, which is to be voted on this Thursday. Thus, my delegation is optimistic that Thursday's meeting will be very brief. I do not think much will remain in the way of intellectual resources, since we have already heard the subject debated at great length, and I think the speakers are gradually using up all their imagination and patience. I therefore support your proposal, Mr. Chairman, that we stick to today's programme. What is being discussed is not on today's programme at all.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status", introduced by Mongolia. The sponsors have expressed the hope that the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status", was introduced by the representative of Mongolia at the 27th meeting on 10 November 1998. The sponsors are listed in the draft resolution itself.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I call on the representative of San Marino, who wishes to speak in explanation of position before a decision is taken.

Ms. Molaroni (San Marino): I would like to refer to the draft resolution on which we are about to vote, document A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status", introduced by the Mongolian delegation.

The Republic of San Marino has always been in favour of nuclear-weapon-free zones and therefore supports the new idea of the declaration of a single nuclear-weapon-free State. As we stated in our intervention during the general debate in the Committee, we believe that such a self-declaration has to be recognized by the international community and given the importance, official status and inviolability it deserves. For this reason the Republic of San Marino hopes the draft resolution will be adopted without a vote.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Is there any objection to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.22 being adopted without a vote?

I call on the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): I would like a 10-minute delay in the decision being adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Before replying to the request put by Pakistan, I would like to point out that we have begun the voting procedure, which cannot be interrupted at this stage. The Committee will take up the request by Pakistan after the adoption of the draft resolution.

I repeat my question: are there any objections to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2 being adopted without a vote?

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Do I understand, Mr. Chairman, that you are saying that we have started the process of voting? Is that your point?

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Quite right. The voting procedure has begun and cannot be interrupted. Once it is completed we will take up your request. Will that satisfy you?

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): The voting procedure on which draft resolution?

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status".

Mr. Akram (Pakistan): Very good. We shall withdraw our request for a delay.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): There does not appear to be any objection to the draft resolution being adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those delegations wishing to explain their positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): The United States was pleased to join the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2, regarding Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status. We believe this draft resolution will encourage constructive steps in the area that could enhance stability in the Central Asian region, and we consider that the political cooperation which the draft resolution calls for will lead to significant international security benefits for Mongolia as well as for the States that participate in the process. Most importantly, we have supported the draft resolution because Mongolia's unique geographic and security situation merits unique consideration. The supportive role to be played by the Secretary-General will further increase the visibility and legitimacy of the cooperative effort, and we hope that the outcome will provide positive and creative security benefits for the international community as a whole.

I note that statements made by some States here concerning draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10 appear to express the misperception that the draft resolution calls for the establishment of a single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone. A close examination of the text reveals that Mongolia has moved beyond such a concept. It now looks to a broader range of measures to increase its international security. As I said, the United States believes this broader approach will yield important security benefits for Mongolia and for the international community.

Mr. Changhe Li (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): The Chinese delegation joined the consensus on the draft resolution entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status". China has all along taken a positive stance on the question of nuclear-weapon-free zones. It has always respected and supported efforts by nuclear-weapon-free countries to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of agreements they have freely arrived at and in the light of the situations prevailing in their respective regions.

On the basis of this position, China understands and supports the desire and efforts of Mongolia to establish a single nuclear-weapon-free State, and we respect and support Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status. China is of the view that countries large or small, strong or weak, are equal members of the international family and they should respect each other. In our relations with other countries we have always followed the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality, mutual benefit and peaceful coexistence.

As a neighbour of Mongolia, China fully respects the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Mongolia and supports the independent foreign policy pursued by it. Our sincere wish is for the security and stability of Mongolia and of all countries in the region to be consolidated. It is also our hope that Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status will be respected by all and that that status will be strengthened.

Mr. Abdullah Faiz (Malaysia): With regard to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2, Malaysia fully supports the concept of the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of the world. Malaysia is a party to the Bangkok Treaty on the establishment of the South-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone, which entered into force on

27 March 1997. Malaysia is also supportive of other Treaties, such as those of Antarctica, Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Pelindaba. In this regard, Malaysia supports Mongolia's declaration as a single- nation nuclear-weapon-free zone. Mongolia's declaration is a bold, creative and commendable step. The creation of such a zone will contribute effectively to disarmament measures, in particular to the prevention of the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It will also enhance regional and global peace and security. We believe that any sovereign nation should have the prerogative to declare itself to be a nuclear-weapon-free State. It is in this spirit that Malaysia has given its support to this draft resolution.

Malaysia has noted that in operative paragraph 4 of the draft resolution an appeal is made for member States of the Asia-Pacific region to support Mongolia's efforts to join the relevant regional security and economic arrangements. While noting this appeal, Malaysia is of the view that Mongolia's efforts to join such arrangements should take into account the procedures for admission to the respective regional arrangements.

Malaysia is indeed happy that this draft resolution has been adopted by consensus.

Mr. Campbell (Australia): Australia supported the draft resolution on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status. We fully support Mongolia's aspirations to nuclear-weapon-free status consistent with the principles and objectives of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament adopted by the 1995 Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) Review and Extension Conference.

However, the separate issue of Mongolia's participation in "relevant regional security and economic arrangements", as contained in operative paragraph 4, would naturally be subject to separate decision by the bodies concerned in the light of their particular procedures and guidelines.

Ms. Thomas (Jamaica): Jamaica wishes to express its support for draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.10/Rev.2, entitled "Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status". We believe that Mongolia's decision to join the community of States which have resolved to maintain non-nuclear-weapon status should be applauded. Jamaica believes that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones is an effective medium through which to pursue the important ultimate objective of universal nuclear disarmament. Initiatives towards this end deserve encouragement.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

The Committee will now consider the next draft resolution on the list, A/C.1/53/L.45, entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*". I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45, entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*", was introduced by the representative of Malaysia at the 18th meeting, on 29 October 1998.

In the second line of the last preambular paragraph, after the words "5 August 1998", add the words "and Addendum 1 dated 29 October 1998".

Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution an additional sponsor is listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2/Add.1.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): A separate vote has been requested on operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution.

(*spoke in English*)

Operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution reads as follows:

> "*Underlines once again* the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control".

If no representatives wish to explain their position or vote on operative paragraph 1 before a decision is taken, we shall proceed to take a decision.

I call on the representative of Jordan on a point of order.

Mr. Aamiry (Jordan): When you say, Mr. Chairman, that we are voting on operative paragraph 1, are you saying that if we vote "yes" that operative paragraph will be included and if we vote "no" it will be excluded?

The Chairman: We vote to see if that operative paragraph will be retained or not.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to vote on operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Bulgaria, France, Monaco, Russian Federation, United States of America

Abstaining:

Czech Republic, Israel, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45 was retained by 133 votes to 5, with 5 abstentions.

[Subsequently, the delegation of Kuwait informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.]

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): The Committee will now proceed to take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45 as a whole.

(*spoke in English*)

I shall now call on representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position or vote before a decision is taken.

Mr. Millim (Luxembourg) (*interpretation from French*): It is my honour to speak on behalf of the three Benelux countries - the Kingdom of Belgium, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg - on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45, entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*".

As I said in 1996 and 1997 during the vote on similar resolutions on this same subject, the Benelux countries attach great importance to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice and have considered the opinions of the Court with great interest. But our three countries did not consider themselves authorized to make a selective reading of the opinion of the Court, which is a single whole and cannot be reduced only to the paragraphs taken up in the draft resolution. The opinion of the Court is an indivisible whole. Selecting certain paragraphs from the opinion can only destroy the balance of the whole and reduce to nought the valuable contribution of the International Court of Justice. Our three countries will vote against draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45, which uses the opinion of the Court abusively and selectively.

Mr. González (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation attributes great importance to international law and, in this framework, to the advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice. Therefore, to put it mildly, my delegation is astonished by the results of the vote on operative paragraph 1. That some countries could have voted against the inclusion of that paragraph seems to us entirely inconsistent with what has been said here.

On the subject before the Committee, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons* is a sound doctrinal basis that should not be put aside. We should recall in this connection of some of the points expressed by the Court:

> "(a) Unanimously,
>
> "There is in neither customary nor conventional international law any specific authorization of the threat or use of nuclear weapons;...
>
> "(d) Unanimously,
>
> "A threat or use of nuclear weapons should also be compatible with the requirements of the international law applicable in armed conflict, particularly those of the principles and rules of international humanitarian law, as well as with specific obligations under treaties and other undertakings which expressly deal with nuclear weapons;...
>
> "(f) Unanimously,
>
> "There exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control." (*A/51/4, para. 182*)

It is obvious that because of their devastating and wide-ranging effects, the use of nuclear weapons can cause immense harm. That is why there is an interrelationship between the issues of disarmament and humanitarian law, bearing in mind that in the light of international law and Article 1, among others, of the United Nations Charter, the international community has a binding obligation to maintain international peace and security, and for this reason we should ban any use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, which would create great instability.

Furthermore, the mere possession - and I stress, the mere possession - of these weapons in a situation of aggravated hostility could be translated into the threat or use of force prohibited by Article 2, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Charter and by Article 52 of the Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties, which gives this principle the character of *jus cogens*, as an inviolable and peremptory norm.

At the purely operational level, this draft resolution requires the existence of preventive diplomacy in keeping with the times, capable of establishing the necessary legal frameworks and shepherding political efforts to prevent effects that would irreversibly alter relations among all the States of the world.

For all these reasons, my delegation believes very strongly that the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice unquestionably constitutes a conceptual frame of reference that must be taken into account as we try to develop modes of cooperation based on trust rather than on the threat of a conflict that could have catastrophic consequences for humankind.

At the same time, my delegation finds it inexplicable that anyone should try to unbalance the content of this important draft resolution by having a separate vote on one paragraph. Clearly, that alters its spirit and its doctrine, as well as the most fundamental norms and provisions of the United Nations Charter and of other relevant international legal instruments.

Mr. Soutar (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom is committed to the goal of the global elimination of nuclear weapons. We have given this commitment practical expression by the national steps announced following our strategic defence review. We have repeatedly made it clear that when satisfied with verified progress towards our goal we will ensure that British nuclear weapons are included in multilateral negotiations.

Considerable progress has been made on nuclear disarmament, and we believe that the negotiation of a fissile material cut-off treaty is a crucial next step, as was recognized by the parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) when they agreed a set of principles and objectives at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. We have already made a unique contribution to this process by ending our own production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and declaring our defence stocks. Britain will continue to play an active and constructive role in getting these vital negotiations off to a good start when the Conference on Disarmament resumes next year.

We welcome the recognition of the importance of obligations under the NPT, including the nuclear-weapon States' obligation on nuclear disarmament under the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*, but given that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45 contains highly selective quotations from the Court's advisory opinion, the United Kingdom abstained in the voting on operative paragraph 1 of the draft resolution.

In view of this selectivity and on account of the unrealistic call in operative paragraph 2 for multilateral negotiations in 1999 leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention, the United Kingdom will vote against the draft resolution as a whole.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I now call on the Committee Secretary.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45 as a whole.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Andorra, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Iceland, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Norway, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45, as a whole, was adopted by 100 votes to 25, with 23 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Souliotis (Greece) (*interpretation from French*): Greece would like to reiterate its respect and esteem for the International Court of Justice, and its attachment to the preservation of its Statute, its prestige and its lofty mission. In that context, Greece has always believed the Court to be an essential instrument for the proper functioning of the United Nations and for the preservation of peace and security in the world. Thus, Greece's inability to support draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45 is in no way a comment on the opinion of the Court, but on the fact that the sponsors of the draft resolution arbitrarily selected certain passages from the opinion of the Court. In fact, for reasons that are not legal in nature, they deemed that they should selectively combine certain passages from the opinion of the Court, thus altering not only its substance but also its spirit.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): As it does each year in corresponding cases, the United States, voted "no" on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45, entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*", as well as in the voting on the separate paragraph.

This draft resolution employs the International Court of Justice's 1996 advisory - I repeat, "advisory" - opinion as a justification to repeat calls made in other draft resolutions for immediate multilateral negotiations on the time-bound elimination of nuclear weapons. The United States position on this matter has not changed. We oppose this idea because we remain convinced that the step-by-step process which is under way encompasses unilateral, bilateral and multilateral efforts and is yielding significant, concrete results in the area of nuclear disarmament. This step-by-step process remains, for the time being, the only realistic approach in this highly complex field.

As ongoing unilateral and bilateral efforts continue to make real progress in reducing nuclear weapons, a multilateral role can be played. The long-awaited negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on the fissile material cut-off treaty should resume in January 1999. Such an agreement is a key element of the international community's nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. It would be unfortunate if this next logical multilateral step in the nuclear disarmament process were to be delayed any further.

In this context I find it puzzling that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45 makes not one express mention of the fissile material cut-off treaty. Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45 is deficient in another way. It mischaracterizes article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the NPT principles and objectives decision document, which are selectively quoted in the fourth and fifth preambular paragraphs by omitting crucial references to general and complete disarmament. This omission distorts the article VI obligation in ways that would appear to relieve non-nuclear-weapon States of any disarmament responsibilities.

References in the thirteenth preambular paragraph and operative paragraphs 1 and 2 of A/C.1/53/L.45 to the International Court of Justice's advisory opinion attempt to turn it into a legal edict that requires immediate negotiations and their rapid conclusion in a multilateral forum. Let me be frank. The International Court of Justice advisory opinion is simply not binding. In any case, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45 misrepresents and distorts its findings.

The United States takes very seriously its NPT article VI obligations and reaffirmed them in the context of the 1995 extension of the NPT. The Court's statement that there exists an obligation to bring to a conclusion negotiations on nuclear disarmament does not alter the substance of the article VI duty in any way, since the responsibility to pursue negotiations in good faith inherently involves seeking a successful conclusion to negotiations.

Mr. Hayashi (Japan): I wish to explain Japan's position in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45, entitled "Follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the *Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons*". Japan voted "yes" on operative paragraph 1 and abstained on the draft resolution as a whole.

As I have already stated in my explanation of vote on other draft resolutions, Japan, which has the sorrowful experience of atomic bombings, fervently desires that the use of nuclear weapons, which causes incomparable human suffering, will never be repeated, and firmly believes that continuous efforts should be made towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Japan believes that because of their immense power to cause destruction, death and injury to human beings, the use of nuclear weapons is clearly contrary to the basic humanitarianism which gives international law its philosophical foundation.

Indeed, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which this draft resolution addresses, demonstrates the complexity of the subject. Japan supports the unanimous opinion of the judges of the International Court of Justice on the existing obligation under international law to pursue nuclear disarmament and to conclude negotiations on that matter in good faith. Japan firmly believes that we must take concrete measures to achieve steady and step-by-step progress in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

From this point of view, Japan believes that priority should be given to bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force as soon as possible, concluding the negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty that will resume at the beginning of 1999, and commencing multilateral discussions on possible steps that should follow a fissile material cut-off treaty.

In Japan's view, there should be an intensive pursuit of such practical steps, rather than a jump to commencing in 1999 — a year that will begin in two months — negotiations leading to a nuclear-weapons convention.

My delegation suggested certain amendments to the delegation of Malaysia on the draft resolution. However, our consultations were unsuccessful, and Japan was obliged to abstain in the voting on the draft resolution as a whole.

Mr. Pearson (New Zealand): New Zealand supported a draft resolution on the same subject in 1996 and in 1997 and has done so again this year despite the fact that there are some elements that we would prefer to see expressed in a different way. Our own national position on nuclear disarmament is more closely reflected in the draft resolution which we, together with a group of other countries, have put forward in draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48. While A/C.1/53/L.45 has therefore for us been somewhat superseded by our own initiative, we nevertheless continue to recognize the value of the following three elements, which were also the basis for our support in previous years: the draft resolution focuses strongly on the important International Court of Justice advisory opinion, it recognizes the urgency of making progress in nuclear disarmament, and it recognizes that the eventual outcome of these negotiations must be comprehensive. From New Zealand's point of view, an eventual outcome might be a convention, or some other instrument or framework or collection of instruments. While we can go along with the language in A/C.1/53/L.45, we prefer not to presuppose what form the outcome of such negotiations would be. We now have that wording in draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.48.

Mr. Chang (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to explain its vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45. My delegation fully recognizes the urgency of accelerating global efforts for non-proliferation and disarmament in the area of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. In this context, we agree in principle with the need to prepare a legal instrument aimed at prohibiting the threat or use of nuclear weapons as an ultimate goal. However, it seems to us that a time-bound programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is not realistic. At this stage, it is time for the international community to focus on the negotiations for a fissile material cut-off treaty. We also consider it important to ensure universal adherence to the existing instrument governing non-proliferation and disarmament in the area of weapons of mass destruction, as well as their full implementation and thorough monitoring. Therefore, my delegation supported operative paragraph 1 but abstained in voting on the draft resolution as a whole.

Mr. Seibert (Germany): The Federal Republic of Germany welcomes the commitment to disarmament in the sphere of nuclear weapons with the goal of their complete elimination, as expressed in draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.45 before us. Germany cannot, however, support the draft resolution since it is only in cooperation with our partners and allies that Germany can participate in initiatives to attain the goal of nuclear disarmament. It is the conviction of the German Federal Government that the objective of complete nuclear disarmament can be achieved only through a step-by-step process.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

The Committee will now take up draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1, in cluster 5, "Regional disarmament and security".

(*spoke in English*)

If there are no general comments on this cluster, the Committee will now proceed to take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1, entitled "Regional disarmament". A recorded vote has been requested.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1, entitled "Regional disarmament" was introduced by the representative of Belarus at the 21st meeting, on 2 November 1998. The sponsors are listed in the draft resolution; however, Mali has withdrawn its sponsorship.

The Chairman: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position or vote before a decision is taken.

Mr. Stankowski (Poland): The delegation of Poland has asked for the floor to explain the position of 12 like-minded countries - namely, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia - on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1, introduced by Belarus under the title "Regional disarmament".

The revisions introduced by Belarus into the text do not change the substance of the initial draft resolution. It was our hope that Belarus would have taken into account the position of 12 countries from the region directly concerned, expressed in their joint statement of 2 November 1998, and would have withdrawn its draft resolution. We very much regret that it has not done so. In such a case, the like-minded countries of the region have no choice but to vote against the draft resolution.

I should also like to inform the Committee that the delegation of Albania has aligned itself with the joint statement of our group of 2 November 1998, and with this explanation of vote, and intends to vote accordingly.

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The associated country of Cyprus and the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area - Iceland and Norway - align themselves with this statement.

The European Union has consistently voiced its support for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a valuable contribution to the realization of the goals of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The European Union reiterates its principled position that nuclear-weapon-free zones should be based on agreements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned. The European Union believes that before a proposal such as that contained in draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1 is brought to the First Committee for adoption, the States of the region should first be consulted. Having heard the common statement of the States concerned, just delivered by the representative of Poland, it is the view of the European Union that this has not been the case in respect of this draft resolution. The members of the European Union will vote against draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1.

Mr. Sadaúskas (Lithuania): I would like to give an explanation of Lithuania's vote in addition to the statement made by Poland, with which we associated ourselves.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1, on regional disarmament, introduced by Belarus, suffers from serious factual and conceptual shortcomings. First, the name and content of the draft resolution do not correspond to each other. However looked at, the draft resolution would not resolve anything about disarmament. At best it is about the regional non-proliferation of nuclear arms.

Secondly, if the draft resolution is about the regional non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, the natural question then is, "Where does one see the danger of proliferation in Central and Eastern Europe?" The only potential nuclear danger confronting the region is the nuclear weapons which exist today in the region, and which are being gradually, albeit slowly, given up. It is particularly peculiar to call on the States of Central and Eastern Europe, as operative paragraph 2 of the draft resolution does, to continue to abide by their nuclear non-proliferation obligations under existing multilateral and bilateral agreements. Does this call to continue imply that there are intentions to discontinue compliance with the existing non-proliferation commitments? We are not aware of such intentions, and if one sees them they must be persuasively identified. We would stand very alert.

Thirdly, if there is a justifiably perceived threat about proliferation in Central and Eastern Europe, we are confused about the chosen forum for the issue. Everyone, including Belarus, knows that Europe has more than enough appropriate and exemplary subregional, regional and pan-European forums where the question could be addressed and, if needed, fully resolved. Why burden the United Nations with an issue which can be successfully and completely addressed in the regional institutions, especially in the light of the ongoing efforts to optimize and streamline the activities of the First Committee and the whole United Nations?

Fourthly, the draft resolution quotes certain very important documents and statements, some with reference to the source and some without. We have difficulty with the selectivity of the quotations. They thus distort the true picture of European security in such a way that, as already mentioned, one might become prone to see a non-existent ghost of nuclear proliferation.

Fifthly, the authors of the draft resolution are well aware that the majority of Central and Eastern European countries do not agree with either the language or the purpose of the draft resolution. It is not just "States" that disagree it is "the" States directly and legitimately concerned from "the" region. Why try to convince someone outside the region of something that the majority of countries in the region do not believe in? We have said that to the authors of the draft resolution loud and clear, and we are surprised still to be unheard.

If the purpose of the draft resolution is what is officially declared by the initiating State, then the draft resolution is superfluous and achieves nothing. But it may well be that the purpose is different - for instance, an attempt to promote the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone or space in Central and Eastern Europe, especially when the draft resolution begins with the notion of nuclear-weapon-free zones. If that is so, we heard on 2 November the Permanent Representative of Poland, on behalf of the majority of Central and Eastern European countries, as well as today in his group explanation of vote, speaking against such an attempt. I find it unnecessary to repeat the main points of that statement. Whatever the purpose of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1, Lithuania will have to vote against it.

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our sincerest appreciation for the withdrawal of nuclear weapons from Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. Those were true disarmament measures of the kind so needed for the slow process of global nuclear disarmament. We believe that nuclear weapons will never return to those countries, and we hope that those weapons that have been withdrawn will be destroyed soon.

Mr. Skračić (Croatia): My delegation would like to make some additional comments on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1, on regional disarmament. Croatia fully subscribes to the statement made by the Permanent Representative of Poland on 2 November 1998 on behalf of 12 like-minded countries from Central and Eastern Europe on this draft resolution, and the one made just recently by the representative of Poland as well. My delegation wishes to reiterate, though, that the institutionalization, or any initiative towards institutionalization, of any zone or space free from nuclear weapons must first enjoy the support of the countries from the region concerned. Support for the establishment of an arrangement freely arrived at among countries from Central and Eastern Europe at present does not exist.

As mentioned earlier by the delegation of Poland, and without prejudice to the future relevance of this idea, my delegation urges Belarus first to engage in bilateral negotiations and consultations with countries from the region concerned and to present the General Assembly with this initiative only as the result of an agreement arrived at during those consultations. Presenting this initiative now, prior to reaching an agreement, serves only to prejudge the wishes of the countries from the region concerned, which in essence can only be counter-productive and will not help to achieve its ultimate aim.

It is for these reasons that my delegation intends to vote against the draft resolution.

Mr. Schevchenko (Ukraine): Our delegation would also like to explain its position with regard to draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1, "Regional disarmament", on which the First Committee is about to take a vote.

As was stated by the authors of the draft resolution, their intention was to flag the positive developments which have taken place in the European region in recent years. This intention, in our view, can only be welcomed, taking into account the scope and multifaceted nature of changes on the political landscape of Central and Eastern Europe. However, in our view, the authors of the proposed draft resolution unfortunately failed to accomplish this good intention. Their document does not reflect objectively and in full scope the positive developments and trends in the region, in particular in the area of security and disarmament.

To speak about the new European security architecture and not to mention the crucial role of the existing institutions in the region, where all the countries of the region jointly work under a common architecture of security and cooperation, is just one serious omission. To refer to regional disarmament and not to mention the joint efforts of countries in promoting transparency and confidence-building measures in the military sphere, which resulted in numerous multilateral and bilateral agreements and arrangements, is another one.

Ukraine, as a part of this process, pays special tribute to its neighbours for a cooperative and constructive approach in this field, which contributes to strengthening the climate of confidence and security in Central and Eastern Europe and to overall stability in Europe. There is no doubt that with the removal of nuclear weapons from the territories of the two Eastern European States, the security climate in the region has improved significantly. The contribution of Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan to the process of practical nuclear disarmament and to strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime has been fairly appreciated by the international community and was appropriately reflected in many draft resolutions adopted in this Committee.

We believe that the importance of what these three States have done has grown immeasurably in view of recent developments in South Asia. However, it should not exclude, as I said before, joint efforts and contributions from the countries of our region in other fields of disarmament.

Finally, the language of some paragraphs, to our mind, contains certain elements of ambiguity which we cannot disregard.

With all these remarks, our delegation will abstain in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker in explanaion of vote or position.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, China, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Fiji, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mexico, Morocco, Myanmar, Namibia, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen

Against:

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Georgia, India, Jamaica, Japan, Mali, Malta, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Peru, Republic of Korea, San Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Togo, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1 was adopted by 57 votes to 41, with 39 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to explain their votes or positions on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): When we initially compared draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23, "Regional disarmament", with the revised text, we noticed that the revised text no longer contained the references in the third preambular paragraph to the principles of democracy and civilian control of the military. The original text noted that the new European security architecture is based, *inter alia*, upon these principles, which, in our view, are vital to regional efforts to promote and maintain peace, security and stability. We wonder why such references were deleted this year.

What is more important, draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1 is flawed because it does not meet an essential criterion for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones. I refer to the 2 November joint statement made by Poland on behalf of itself and 11 other Eastern and Central European nations, as well as the statements given today by Poland, Austria, Lithuania, Croatia and Ukraine. The overwhelming majority of Eastern and Central European States expressed their "lack of interest" in the zone called for in the draft resolution and urged the sponsor to withdraw it. We were hoping that the sponsor would heed the advice of its regional neighbours and do just that, but it did not, and the United States could not support a draft resolution on a nuclear-free zone in Eastern and Central Europe when most of the States of Eastern and Central Europe do not.

Ms. Martinic (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1, entitled "Regional disarmament", because in our opinion there is no sign or intention of deploying nuclear weapons on the territories of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Therefore, the objective of this draft resolution is not clear.

Mr. Karem (Egypt): Egypt supported the draft resolution because of our long and traditional support for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the globe. That has always been in conformity with the principles and provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and in particular article VII. We also supported the draft resolution as an important confidence-building measure that we hope will spill over to the States of the region concerned.

We note that the first preambular paragraph recognizes the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones with due regard to the specific characteristics of each region and on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States. That is an essential notion. In the second preambular paragraph the draft resolution welcomes the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the globe, and in particular the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa under the Pelindaba Treaty.

It is on this premise that Egypt has always supported the principle and the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America, the South Pacific, South-East Asia and Africa, where we, together with our African colleagues, played a pioneering role for the fruition of that zone.

We follow with great interest the efforts being made by Mongolia to advance the concept of a single-State nuclear-weapon-free zone, and we also follow the efforts of Central Asian States to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in their region. We view the efforts of Belarus to advance the concept of a nuclear-weapon-free space in Central and Eastern Europe in the same spirit. Accordingly, and in this light, we voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.23/Rev.1.

In doing so, however, we realize the importance of rallying much more support among the States of the regions concerned. We therefore also hope that the States of Central and Eastern Europe will have the requisite opportunities to sort out their differences and to arrive at a common understanding of how to advance the concept of a nuclear-weapon-free space.

The Chairman: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote or position.

The Committee will now consider draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1, entitled "Transparency in armaments". This draft resolution belongs to cluster 6, "Confidence-building measures, including transparency in armaments". If no delegations wish to make a general statement on that cluster, I shall now call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1, entitled "Transparency in armaments", was introduced by the representative of Egypt at the 20th meeting, on 30 October 1998. Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, additional sponsors are listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2 and Add.2.

The Chairman: A recorded vote has been requested on the eighth preambular paragraph, which reads as follows:

> "*Stressing* the need to achieve universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention, with a view to realizing the goal of the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction".

The Committee will now vote on that eighth preambular paragraph. If no delegation wishes to explain its position or vote before the Committee takes action on that eighth preambular paragraph, we will now vote on that paragraph.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to vote on the eighth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of

Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

India, Israel

Abstaining:

Cuba, Pakistan

The eighth preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1 was retained by 137 votes to 2, with 2 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no delegation wishes to explain its vote or position on the eighth preambular paragraph, the Committee will now take action on operative paragraph 3 (b) of draft resolution A.C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1. A separate vote has been requested.

(*spoke in English*)

Operative paragraph 3 (b) reads as follows:

> "The elaboration of practical means for the further development of the Register in order to increase transparency related to weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, and to transfers of equipment and technology directly related to the development and manufacture of such weapons".

(*spoke in French*)

I now call on the representative of South Africa, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote before a decision is taken.

Mr. Goosen (South Africa): Given the South African Government's policy on non-proliferation and disarmament, together with its position on transparency in armaments, South Africa has supported past resolutions on this subject and will again this year support draft resolutions A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1 and A/C.1/53/L.43.

Our support for draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1 is based on our belief that the principle of transparency should also apply to nuclear weapons and to the transfers of equipment and technology directly related to the development and manufacture of such weapons. We therefore support the notion contained in draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1 that the need for a register to increase transparency related to weapons of mass destruction should be further explored.

South Africa will, however, abstain in the voting on operative paragraph 3 (b) of the draft resolution, as we do not believe that a linkage should be established with the current Register, which deals with conventional weapons.

The Chairman: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote or position before the voting.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to vote on operative paragraph 3 (b) of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Argentina, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Brazil, China, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Uzbekistan

Operative paragraph 3 (b) of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1 was retained by 80 votes to 46, with 17 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no delegation wishes to explain its vote or position on operative paragraph 3 (b), the Committee will now take a decision on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1 as a whole.

I call on the representative of Austria, who wishes to speak in explanation of position or vote before a decision is taken.

Mr. Hajnoczi (Austria) (*interpretation from French*): It is my honour, on behalf of the European Union, to speak on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1, "Transparency in armaments", before it is put to a vote in the Committee. The countries of Central and Eastern Europe associated with the European Union - Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia - as well as the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Association - Iceland and Norway - associate themselves with this statement. The States subscribing to the present explanation of vote will vote against the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1 is not acceptable for very important reasons of principle. General Assembly resolution 52/38 B last year had already established an equivalency between the concept of transparency in conventional arms, as implemented through the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and the concept of transparency in relation to weapons of mass destruction. As the Committee will recall, the European Union and the countries associated with this statement voted as a bloc against resolution 52/38 B. With respect to the text of last year's resolution, the text now before us only reinforces the attempted linkage between, on the one hand, additional progress in the development of the Register and, on the other hand, greater transparency concerning weapons of mass destruction.

The Union is fully aware that positions on this latter subject vary considerably. However, whatever the views on the way to apply transparency to weapons of mass destruction, that cannot be linked either to transparency in the field of conventional weapons in general or to the United Nations Register in particular.

For these reasons, the European Union and the States aligning themselves with this statement will be compelled to vote against draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1.

The Chairman: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote or position before action is taken.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee to conduct the voting.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): The Committee will now proceed to vote on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1 as a whole.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Guinea, Guyana, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Abstaining:

Argentina, Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, Cyprus, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malta, Marshall Islands, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Uzbekistan

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1, as a whole, was adopted by 82 votes to 44, with 17 abstentions.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those representatives who wish to make statements in explanation of vote or position.

Mr. Grey (United States of America): The United States voted "no" on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1, entitled "Transparency in armaments". We are disappointed that the sponsors continue to link the concepts of transparency in conventional arms to transparency in weapons of mass destruction. Since the international community has not reached broad agreement on methods and approaches that would permit the United Nations Register to address transparency in weapons of mass destruction, advocating that the Register be expanded in this fashion amounts to a convenient excuse for certain countries not to submit data on conventional arms.

We believe a more appropriate approach is outlined in draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.43, the draft resolution on transparency in armaments sponsored by the Netherlands and a wide range of other countries, including the United States. It calls for universal participation in the Register while encouraging Member States to provide views to the Secretary-General on its further development.

I note that the United States voted "yes" in the vote on the eighth preambular paragraph in the context of our commitment to seek universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention and in the context of United States commitments to these three instruments.

Mr. Changhe Li (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): China has always upheld the complete prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. It believes that to achieve that objective it is both necessary and inevitable ultimately to adopt transparency measures for weapons of mass destruction. To date the international community has already worked out Conventions on the complete prohibition of chemical and biological weapons. The Chemical Weapons Convention has already entered the phase of comprehensive implementation, and the negotiations are being stepped up on the protocol to enhance the effectiveness of the Biological Weapons Convention. Questions concerning the transparency and verification of these two classes of weapons of mass destruction either have been or are in the process of being resolved.

As to the remaining class of existing weapons of mass destruction - namely, nuclear weapons - we believe that the current priority is to proceed from the present situation by making efforts to promote the process of nuclear disarmament and prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons. In this regard, the countries that possess the largest and most advanced nuclear arsenals should maintain their position of leadership by drastically reducing their nuclear arsenals and abandoning multiple standards on the question of preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons so as to create conditions for the ultimate complete transparency and elimination of nuclear weapons.

For these reasons, and in view of the various views on reconvening the group of experts on the questions of transparency in armaments and expansion of the Register, the Chinese delegation abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1 as a whole and on its operative paragraph 3 (b).

Ms. Kunadi (India): My delegation has asked for the floor to explain its position on the draft resolution just adopted. My delegation's position on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is well known,and therefore we cast a negative vote on the eighth preambular paragraph. Regarding operative paragraph 3, we feel that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms deserves our continuing support and that further consolidation and universalization of the Register are necessary to realize its full potential, whereupon we will be in a better position to assess to what extent and in which direction the process can be carried forward.

Ms. Hamilton (Australia): Australia continues to view as unproductive any suggestion, implied or otherwise, that transparency in relation to conventional weapons or progress in the Register of Conventional Arms should be conditional on transparency in weapons of mass destruction. Promoting this linkage is unlikely, in our assessment, to help the cause of transparency in respect of either. Moreover, it is unclear precisely what the draft resolution would hope to achieve theoretically by including weapons of mass destruction in the Register.

Given that biological and chemical weapons are already banned under international Conventions, it is difficult to see what useful information could be revealed through a transparency-reporting mechanism in the United Nations Register. States parties to the respective conventions would presumably report a nil return, as would States non-parties in compliance with the provisions of the Conventions. In short, the existing multilateral Conventions covering chemical weapons and biological weapons, and their verification mechanisms, are in themselves a type of transparency measure, and no additional value could realistically be expected to be gained from adding chemical and biological weapons to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Rather, our efforts should focus on universalizing the two Conventions.

Similarly, in respect of nuclear weapons, we question what practical knowledge is expected to be gained from including them in the Register of Conventional Arms. Extensive information regarding the inventories of the nuclear-weapon States is already readily available. Again, it would be far more productive, in our view, to concentrate our efforts on universalizing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr. Benítez Versón (Cuba) (*interpretation from Spanish*): My delegation supported draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1 because we completely agree with its essential elements, including the recognition that an increase in transparency in weapons of mass destruction, and nuclear weapons in particular, and in transparency in the transfer of technology and equipment directly related to the development and production of such weapons would strengthen stability, peace and regional and international security.

Operative paragraph 3 (b) does not seem to be particularly pertinent. We hope that States members will submit their views to the Secretary-General as requested in the main part of paragraph 3.

Finally, we should like to put on record that Cuba's affirmative vote in no way alters our well-known position regarding the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to which my country has not acceded because we consider it a selective and discriminatory instrument whereby two different categories of States are established and the possession of nuclear weapons is legitimized for one of those categories. That is why my delegation abstained in the separate voting on the eighth preambular paragraph.

Mr. Efrat (Israel): My delegation voted against the draft resolution since we do not consider it necessary or useful to expand the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms to weapons of mass destruction. In our view, such expansion may impair its functioning. Instead, we maintain that efforts should be devoted to encouraging those States which have not yet done so to join the Register. In that regard, we are also a bit surprised to hear calls from neighbouring States to expand the Register while they themselves have so far failed to submit reports under the existing one.

Finally, we maintain that transparency with regard to military holdings both through imports and through local production can be effective only if based on regional arms control agreements and on the principles of reciprocity and comprehensiveness.

Mr. Dehghani (Islamic Republic of Iran): As we have already stated, in our view, the principle of transparency in armaments in accordance with the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 L applies to conventional weapons, weapons of mass destruction and high technology with military purposes.

My delegation wishes that all applications of General Assembly resolution 46/36 L had been reflected in operative paragraph 3 (b) of this draft resolution. However, because my delegation attaches great importance to transparency in armaments, we voted in favour of draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.39/Rev.1.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote or position.

The Committee will now take up draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.5/Rev.1, which belongs to cluster 7, "Disarmament machinery".

(*spoke in English*)

If no delegation wishes to make a general statement on that cluster, the Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.5/Rev.1, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific".

The sponsors of the draft resolution have expressed the wish that it be adopted by the Committee without a vote. In the absence of objection to that, I now call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.5/Rev.1, entitled "United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific", was introduced by the representative of Nepal at the 27th meeting, on 10 November 1998. The sponsors are listed in the draft resolution. An amendment to this draft resolution, document A/C.1/53/L.46, was withdrawn at the 27th meeting, on 10 November 1998.

The Chairman: If no delegation wishes to explain its position, we shall now proceed to the adoption of the draft resolution.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.5/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman: If no delegation wishes to explain its position on the draft resolution just adopted, the Committee will now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.12/Rev.1, entitled "Report of the Conference on Disarmament".

It is the wish of the sponsor that the draft resolution be adopted without a vote. If there is no objection to that procedure being followed, I now call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.12/Rev.1, entitled "Report of the Conference on Disarmament", was introduced by the representative of the United Kingdom at the 27th meeting, on 10 November 1998. The sponsor is identified in the draft resolution itself.

I call on the representative of Portugal, who wishes to make a statement in explanation of position before action is taken.

Mr. Monteiro (Portugal): I have asked for the floor to refer, on behalf of Portugal and Greece, to document A/C.1/53/L.12/Rev.1, concerning the report of the Conference on Disarmament. We recognize that the Conference on Disarmament, as the single global multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community, has a primary role in substantive negotiations on priority questions of disarmament. Thus, we attach major importance to becoming a member of the Conference.

Rule 2 of the rules of procedure of the Conference on Disarmament provides that membership of the Conference will be reviewed at regular intervals. The reason for that rule is clear: it stems from the tension between limited membership of the Conference, on the one hand, and the universal scope of its tasks, on the other. This task is to negotiate multilateral agreements in the field of disarmament designed to be adhered to by all States. Therefore, Portugal and Greece consider that the Conference on Disarmament should be open to all States that apply for membership. Only that approach will progressively eliminate the tension between limited membership and the universality of Conference activities.

Enhancing the Conference's political legitimacy will facilitate the potential universality and the application of legal instruments produced by the Conference. Each and every decision to move in this direction should therefore restate the principle of the extension as a dynamic and safe process in order to prevent the concept of "regular intervals" referred to in rule 2 from being wrongly applied. It is our understanding that "regular intervals" does not mean every 10 or 20 years.

Portugal and Greece have expressed their support for the most recent proposal of enlargement as an intermediate step in an ongoing process of phased expansion of Conference on Disarmament membership to all candidates, and on the understanding that the Conference on Disarmament would remain seized of this matter.

As consensus was not reached, we consider it necessary to reappoint a special coordinator at the beginning of the 1999 session of the Conference on Disarmament. In this context, we welcome the fact that draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.12/Rev.1 encourages the Conference on Disarmament to continue its consultations on the review of its membership. Portugal and Greece hope that these consultations will lead to the successful treatment of this question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference on Disarmament, to which we attach great importance.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the only speaker in explanation of position before action is taken.

If there is no objection, we shall now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.12/Rev.1.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.12/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those delegations wishing to explain their position or vote on the draft resolution just adopted.

Mr. Majoor (Netherlands): The Netherlands gladly joined the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.12/Rev.1, on the report of the Conference on Disarmament, and wishes to express its great appreciation to the President of the Conference on Disarmament, Ambassador Soutar of the United Kingdom, as well as to his predecessors for being able to move the Conference on Disarmament forward on the various issues under discussion. Much progress has been made, and that augurs well for the work of the Conference on Disarmament in 1999.

Since draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.12/Rev.1 makes no explicit mention of the work of the six special coordinators which were appointed during the 1998 session of the Conference on Disarmament, although two reform issues are mentioned, I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of my delegation, to the special coordinators both on the three substantive issues - prevention of an arms race in outer space, anti-personnel landmines and transparency in armaments - as well as the reform coordinators on expansion, the agenda and improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament.

The special coordinators were not able to reach consensus on the issues they were dealing with, but we feel that they carried out impressive work in trying to bring positions closer together and thus in exploring the way in which the Conference should take these issues up in the near future. We hope and trust that their recommendations will be considered positively and swiftly.

We would also like to thank, of course, the Chairmen of the ad hoc committees on the fissile material treaty and on security assurances for their invaluable work. We hope that they will be able to resume their work right at the beginning of the 1999 session of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Keskintepe (Turkey): We joined the consensus on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.12/Rev.1, on the report of the Conference on Disarmament. However, we would have preferred the language in operative paragraph 6 to have been preserved as it was in the original version, that is, encouraging the Conference on Disarmament to "intensify" rather than to "continue" its consultations on the review of its membership.

Mr. Thema (South Africa): Had there been a vote on this draft resolution, South Africa would also have called for a separate vote on operative paragraph 3, which welcomes the establishment of an ad hoc committee in the Conference on Disarmament under agenda item 4, entitled "Effective International Arrangements to Assure Non-Nuclear-Weapon States Against the Use or Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons".

As members of the First Committee are aware, South Africa is a strong supporter of and active participant in the negative security assurances issue. Our view, however, is that negative security assurances are an integral part of the bargain struck within the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in terms of which non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty have undertaken not to aspire to the possession of these weapons. South Africa consequently believes that the issue should be dealt with in the context of the NPT's strengthened review process. This view is further strengthened by the fact that the Conference on Disarmament, in all the years that it has dealt with this matter, has not shown any progress.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of position.

The Committee will now take up draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50/Rev.1, entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament".

The sponsors have expressed the wish that this draft resolution be adopted without a vote. If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to act accordingly.

I call on the Secretary of the Committee.

Mr. Lin Kuo-chung (Secretary of the Committee): Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50/Rev.1, entitled "Convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament", was introduced by the representative of South Africa, on behalf of the member States of the Non-Aligned Movement, at the 26th meeting, on 9 November 1998. Besides the sponsors listed in the draft resolution, an additional sponsor is listed in document A/C.1/53/INF/2.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): If no delegation wishes to speak in explanation of position, we shall now take action on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50/Rev.1.

Draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50/Rev.1 was adopted.

The Chairman (*interpretation from French*): I shall now call on those delegations wishing to explain their position on the draft resolution just adopted.

Ms. Crittenberger (United States of America): My delegation is pleased that for the second year in a row the First Committee was able to adopt, without a vote, a draft resolution on a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV). Such a result shows that member States continue to realize that an SSOD IV should be convened only when its purposes are clear and when concrete and balanced results based on consensus are possible. United States support for this draft resolution is predicated on this requirement - the requirement for consensus - in order to proceed to an SSOD IV.

In our view, an SSOD IV will be useful only if there is a consensus on forward-looking objectives and a balanced agenda that includes not only nuclear disarmament issues but also such topics as conventional weapons, transparency, confidence-building measures and non-proliferation. The United Nations Disarmament Commission came close to achieving such a consensus at its 1998 session. We find it remarkable that after three years of consideration in the Disarmament Commission, when consensus appeared close at hand the erstwhile strongest advocates of an SSOD IV were the ones who prevented a consensus from emerging.

United States support for this draft resolution represents a willingness to continue the search for such a consensus on the basis of work already accomplished in the Disarmament Commission, specifically, the paper presented by the 1998 Chairman of the Disarmament Commission's SSOD IV Working Group, contained in annex III of the Disarmament Commission's report (A/53/42). In our view, there is no need to start over, nor should much time be needed to finish this task.

Ms. Hamilton (Australia): I would like to explain Australia's position on draft resolution A/C.1/53/L.50/Rev.1, on which we have just joined the consensus.

It is against the accepted working methods of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to continue an item for a fourth session. Australia regards the agreement to do so in this draft resolution as exceptional, and we accept it reluctantly.

The Disarmament Commission came very close to agreement on this issue at its last session. In the end it was blocked by one or two members of the very group which advocates the holding of the fourth session. We would expect the most interested delegations to consult thoroughly before the next session so that the small number of outstanding issues can be resolved quickly. The Disarmament Commission already has two important substantive items on which to complete its work in 1999, and the vast bulk of its meeting time should be allocated to those items.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.